THE CASE OF THE Church of *England*,

Briefly and truly ſtated,
In the three firſt and fundamental
PRINCIPLES
Of a Chriſtian Church.

I. *The Obligation of Chriſtianity, by Divine Right.*
II. *The Juriſdiction of the Church, by Divine Right.*
III. *The Inſtitution of Epiſcopal Superiority, by Divine Right.*

By *S. P.* a Presbyter of the Church of *England.*

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XUM

A Scheme of the general

CONTENTS.

PART I.

THree popular Principles destructive of the Church of England Page 1.

The absurdity of Mr. Hobb's Principle, that the Sovereign Power is the only founder of all Religion in every Commonwealth p.7

Mr. Seldens account of the Jurisdiction of the Church to be meerly Civil p.27

His account of Excommunication from Adam to Moses considered p.37

The same from Moses to the Captivity, and from the Captivity to the time of our Saviour p.42

The same in our Saviours time, and, first, as to its Usage p.54

Secondly, as to the Right, which is proved to have been neither Judicial nor Imperial, but purely Divine p.62

The Contents.

Excommunication in the Christian Church proved to have been of Apostolical Antiquity p. 71

The Texts of Scripture upon which it is grounded, carry in them true and proper Jurisdiction, and appropriate its exercise to the Church p. 76

And that by Divine Institution, not meer voluntary Confederacy p. 89

All Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction left entirely by the Christian Emperours to the Ecclesiastical State, and that the Imperial Laws, extant both in the Theodosian *Code and* Justinian, *are no new Laws, but only the Canons of the Church, ratified with temporal Penalties* p. 91

PART

PART II.

AN account of the birth of the Opinion, that there was no Form of Government ſetled in the Chriſtian Church by Divine Inſtitution Page 117

That our Saviour founded his Church in an imparity of Eccleſiaſtical Officers demonſtrated; this imparity proved to conſiſt in a ſuperiority of Power as well as Order, and the Inſtitution of it ſhewn to be of perpetual obligation p. 124

The Authority of the Apoſtolical Practice vindicated againſt divers exceptions. The vanity and abſurdity of the Objection from the ambiguity of the names, Biſhop and Presbyter. The divine Obligation of Apoſtolical practice in this matter proved p. 135

The practice of the Primitive Church in the Ages next and immediately after the Apoſtles. The pretence of the defect of the Records of the Church in the firſt Age falls as foul upon Chriſtianity it ſelf as the Form of Government p. 143

The

The Argument, first, from the defect as to places considered and confuted p.148
Secondly, from the defect as to Times and Persons p.150
The constant Tradition of the Church proved, first, by the Testimony of St. Clement *of* Rome. *Secondly, of* Ignatius; *his Epistles demonstrated to be genuine* p.155
The same proved from the Apostolical Canons, and the Canons proved to be of Primitive Antiquity p. 177
The Testimonies of the Ancients vindicated from the pretence of ambiguity; and first, in that they have not informed us whether the Succession were only of Order, or of Power p.183
Secondly, In that it is not universal; but whether it be or not, it is sufficient, in that there are no Records against it, and the Records of all the chiefest Churches are clear for it p. 189
Thirdly, In that this Succession is sometimes attributed to Presbyters; this shewn to be apparently false, and if it were true, frivolous p.203
That the ancient Church owned Episcopacy as of Divine Institution, and not Ecclesiastical p.213

St. Jeroms

The Contents.

St. Jeroms *Authority throughly considered, and turned upon himself, so as to make this Objection out of him against it the strongest Argument to prove the Divine Institution of Episcopacy* p.216

The Custom of the Church of Alexandria *of the Ordination of their Bishop by Presbyters refuted, and the Story of* Eutychius *concerning it shewn to be false and fooliſh* p.231

If we take away the Divine Right of some Form of Church-Government, it unavoidably resolves the Church into Independency and Confusion p.243

The Government of the Church by Episcopacy as setled by Divine Right the only effectal Bulwork against Popery p.252

A Postscript p. 263

PART I.

WHEN I conſider on one ſide with what triumph the Church of *England* was, together with His Majeſty, reſtored, with what Laws guarded, with what Vigour aſſerted, with what Zeal defended: and on the other with what folly and peeviſhneſs oppoſed; that none of its implacable Enemies have ever been able to diſcover any the leaſt real Defects or Corruptions in its Conſtitution. That, by the confeſſion of all wiſe men, it approaches neareſt of any Church in the World to the primitive Purity; that it is free from all Impoſtures and Innovations; that it does not abuſe its Children with Pious Frauds and Arts of Gain, nor ſacrifiſe the Intereſts of Souls to its own Wealth and Grandeur; that it aſſerts the Rights of Princes againſt all Prieſtly Uſurpations; that it does not

enrage the People with Enthuſiaſm on one hand, nor enſlave them with Superſtition on the other. That its Doctrins are Pure, Simple, and Apoſtolical, and its Diſcipline Eaſie, Prudent, and Merciful. In a word, that it is a Church that wants nothing but only that we would ſuffer her to be what ſhe profeſſes and deſires to be. When (I ſay) I conſidered all this with my ſelf, it could not but ſtrike me with wonder and amazement that a Church ſo unanimouſly owned, ſo powerfully protected, ſo excellently conſtituted, ſo approved by all wiſe and good men, ſhould in all this time be ſo far from obteining any true and effectual ſettlement, that it ſhould be almoſt ſtript naked of all the Rights and Priviledges of a Chriſtian Church, expoſed to ſcorn and contempt, deſerted by its Friends, trampled upon by its Enemies, and truly reduced to the ſtate of the *Poor deſpiſed Church of* England. But then conſidering farther with my ſelf what might be the grounds and occaſions of ſuch a wild and ſeemingly unaccountable Apoſtaſie, I quickly found three very prevailing Principles utterly inconſiſtent with

with the being of a Chriſtian Church, wherewith the generality of mens minds are poſſeſt, and eſpecially thoſe that have of late appeared the moſt Zealous Patriots of the Church of *England*. No wonder then if the building be ſo weak and tottering, when it is erected upon ſuch falſe and rotten Foundations; ſo that whilſt theſe treacherous Principles lie at the bottom of the Work, it is plainly impoſſible to bring it to any ſure and laſting ſettlement. And tis theſe falſe and unhappy Principles that I ſhall now endeavour to repreſent and by plain reaſon to remove. They are chiefly theſe three; the firſt is that of Mr. *Hobbs* and his Followers, that own the Church of *England* only becauſe it is Eſtabliſht by the Law of *England*, and allow no Authority either to that or any other Religion than as it is injoined by the Sovereign Power. Though a Religion that claims no higher Obligation confeſſes it ſelf to be no Religion, for none it is unleſs Enacted by Divine Authority. The ſecond is that of Mr. *Selden* and his Followers, that acknowledges the ſtanding Laws of the Chriſtian Church to have been derived

from a Divine Inſtitution, but derives all manner of Government and Authority in it from the Civil State. The third is the Opinion of ſome Learned and Moderate Divines, both at home and abroad, that grant indeed the neceſſity of ſome kind of Government in the Church, but deny it to have been ſetled and fixed by our Saviour in any one Form, or upon any certain Order of men, and leave it wholly at ſomebodies diſpoſal (though who that ſomebody is they have not as yet clearly determined) to appoint Officers and Governours, as ſhall be thought moſt prudent and ſuitable to the preſent Circumſtances of things. Now upon any of theſe Principles it is not at all material whether we aſſert any ſuch thing as a Church of *England* or not, for they are all but ſo many Contradictions both to the being of a Church and to themſelves, at leaſt if we purſue each party to the bottom of their Opinion, they only aſſert the Shadow or Ghoſt of a Church, upon ſuch Principles as are directly inconſiſtent with the Fundamental Conſtitution of all Chriſtian Churches, and ſo have, as it were, ſtoln

ſtoln away the Church of *England* from itſelf, ſetting up the name againſt the thing, the Idea againſt the Reality, and the Notion againſt the Practice. For the firſt ſuppoſes a Church without Religion; the ſecond a Society without Government; the third a Government without Governours. And what can be more abſurd and inconſiſtent? For a Church without Religion is no Church; a Society without Government is no Society; and a Government that is not lodged ſomwhere is no Government. So that though theſe Opinions are not equally wicked in themſelves, the firſt being open and avowed Atheiſm, yet are they, equally deſtructive to the Fundamental Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church, as it is a Society founded not by any human Authority but Divine Right.

With Mr. *Hobbs* and his Church I ſhall be very brief, becauſe his Notions here (as indeed they are every where) are no better than groſs and palpable Contradictions.

Neither ſhould I ſpend much pains upon the ſecond opinion, becauſe the abſurdity of it is ſo eaſily demonſtrable

from the Nature of Society it ſelf, but ſeeing Mr. *Selden*, a very Learned Perſon, has taken infinite pains in the Argument, ſearched all Authors and all Records to heap together every thing that might ſerve his cauſe, I ſhall wait upon him through all the material parts of his Diſcourſe. But with the third ſort I intend to treat more largely, becauſe that is the Church at this preſent in faſhion, and is become popular and plauſible by the Authority of ſome Learned men, that have owned and aſſerted it. And therefore I ſhall carefully demonſtrate its vanity and falſehood from our Saviours expreſs Inſtitution; from the certain practice of the Apoſtles; from all the moſt undoubted Records of the Church; and laſtly from the great inconveniences that would unavoidably follow upon it. And when we have gained theſe three Fundamental points, we may then and not till then proceed to farther propoſals for the true ſettlement of the Chureh of *England*; for without them, whatever men may talk of it, all their Diſcourſe of a Church is no more than a Notion and a Phantaſm, a Platonick Common-

Wealth

Wealth, and a World in the Moon.

First then, as for Mr. *Hobbs* his Opinion, it is scarce worth any mans Confutation, because it so plainly confutes itself. For what can be more absurd and ridiculous than to make (as he does) the serious Belief of Religion necessary to the security of Government, and yet discover to all those that he would have brought under the Power of this persuasion, that it is in reality nothing but an useful and necessary Imposture. And yet into this prepostrous course of Politicks does Mr. *Hobbs* suffer himself to be driven by his pedantick Pride and Vanity. That though it be above all things necessary to the Empire of our Sovereign Lord *Leviathan* that the common people be abused with the Belief and scared with the dread of invisible Powers, yet lest they should be tempted to think the great Philosopher himself so weak as to be betrayed into the same Opinion, he Publishes a Book to all the World to no other purpose (beside Flattering the Tyrant *Cromwel*) than to declare that neither himself nor any wise man ought to regard the Tales of Religion, and

that they are only deſigned to abuſe the ignorant and the ſilly. Juſt as if this great Stateſman ſhould go about to fright Birds from his Corn (as he ſpeaks) with an empty Doublet, an Hat and a crooked Stick, but yet leſt the Jack-Daws ſhould take him for one of their own ſilly Flock, he ſhould take ſpecial care to inform them that himſelf knows it to be only a man of Clouts. This alone is ſufficient to diſcover the vanity and the danger of the *Hobbian* Religion, when it is nothing elſe but an open Declaration of Atheiſm and Impiety. Though indeed this way of trifling is ſo natural to Mr. *Hobbs* that, as much as he loves his own Opinions, he always contradicts them. And this is a plain Demonſtration of the Ignorance of the pretenders to Wiſdom in this Age, that ſo Inconſiſtent and Unphiloſophical a Writer ſhould obtain ſo much Credit and Authority among them. For though he have a very facetious Wit, and is the Author of many pleaſant ſayings, yet he was never Maſter of one Philoſophick Notion. But for their conviction I ſhall challenge them to ſhew me more incoherent and inconſiſtent reaſonings than

than are his undoubted and Mathematical Demonſtrations againſt the Being of God and the Principles of Religion. Firſt then, would you believe that there is a God, or not? Mr. *Hobbs* gives you your choice. Chooſe which you pleaſe, he will demonſtrate either by the ſame Topick. Will you have no Deity? It is manifeſt there can be none, *becauſe there can be no firſt Mover, becauſe nothing can move itſelf, and therefore when men go about to prove a Deity from the ſucceſſion of Cauſes and Effects, they prove nothing but the neceſſity of Eternal motion, for as it is true that nothing can move itſelf, ſo is it true that nothing can move any thing elſe unleſs itſelf be firſt moved.* Here then the Demonſtration is pregnant, that there can be no firſt Cauſe, becauſe nothing can move it ſelf, and becauſe all motion is Eternal. But will you have a Deity? The Demonſtration of it is as undeniable: *For he that from any effect he ſeeth come to paſs ſhould reaſon to the next and immediate Cauſe thereof, and from thence to the Cauſe of that Cauſe, and plunge himſelf profoundly in the purſuit of Cauſes; ſhall at laſt come to this, that there muſt be (as even the Heathen Phi-*

Phyſ. c. 26.

Leviath. c. 12.

Philoſophers confeſſed) one firſt Mover, that is, a firſt and an Eternal Cauſe of all things; which is that which men mean by the name of God. Could any man think it poſſible that both theſe Demonſtrations ſhould drop from the Pen of the ſame infallible Philoſopher? or that the man that can demonſtrate after this rate ſhould be ſo confident as to boaſt of nothing lower than Mathematical Demonſtration in all his Writings? But though Mr. *Hobbs* be able to demonſtrate Contradictions, yet himſelf can hold but one ſide, and that is always the wrong one. For it is the only ſcope of all his Natural Philoſophy to affirm (I do not ſay to prove) that there can be no other Cauſe or Principle in the Univerſe beſide the meer Aggregate of Natural Cauſes. By which Topick he plainly demonſtrates there can be no ſuch Being as a Deity. *For if there is, either he is a Corporeal or an Incorporeal ſubſtance; but an Incorporeal Subſtance is the ſame with an Incorporeal Body: If Corporeal, then either the world or a part of it, for there can be nothing beſide; but it can be neither, becauſe by God is meant the Author of the World, and therefore they*

they who ſay the World or any part of it is God, ſay it has no Cauſe, and ſo that there is no God. What Demonſtration can be fuller and plainer than this, that the Deity can be no Being diſtinct from the Univerſe, nor the Univerſe itſelf, nor any part of it, and therefore is nothing? But though it be demonſtrable from the Nature of Things that there is no God, yet he tells us the belief of a Deity is neceſſary upon the Authority of Revelation, and out of reverence to the Publick Laws. Though he has peremptorily determined that none can know the truth of a Revelation made to another, but they to whom God himſelf has revealed it ſupernaturally, ſo that no Revelation, unleſs immediately made to my ſelf, can be of any uſe to me in this Enquiry. And though he had not thus carefully prevented its proper efficacy, yet when he comes to it we ſhall find him as much concerned to deſtroy the Grounds of believing any Revelation, as here he is to take away the Proof of a Deity from the Nature of the Univerſe, and as for his Reverence to the Publick Laws, it is nothing elſe but his Declaration of Atheiſm repeted,

viz.

viz. that though I *Thomas Hobbs* have no ground to believe that there is any ſuch Being as a Deity in the World, nay though I am able to demonſtrate the contrary to all the World, yet for Faſhion-ſake, and out of compliance with the Cuſtom of my Country, I care not though I ſay that there is one, only I deſire all people to do me the right as to obſerve that I only ſay ſo, and not think me ſo mean a Philoſopher as in good earneſt to believe ſo.

And in the ſame manner that he has deſtroyed the Evidence of a Deity, has he taken away the Obligation of all his Laws of Juſtice and Honeſty, by ſuppoſing ſuch a State of Nature, in which mankind being exempt from all Government may do whatever they pleaſe without the violation of any Law. Which to ſuppoſe is to ſuppoſe no Deity; for if there be a Deity, there can be no ſuppoſition of any ſuch State of Nature in which Mankind can be exempted from his Government. And here too he demonſtrates contradictions from the ſame Topick. All men being by Nature of equal Power, and therefore mutually fearing each other, right reaſon dictates

to

to every man to defend himſelf by force and hoſtility. And yet becauſe all other men are of equal power with himſelf, and that ſtate of Hoſtility is very unſafe and uncomfortable, therefore the very ſame right Reaſon dictates to every man to ſeek the Friendſhip, as much as in him lies, of all men. But though right Reaſons Natural State of Peace be ſo Mathematically demonſtrated, yet in the ſuppoſition of its more Ancient State of War lyes the whole myſtery of Mr. *Hobbs* his Morals and Politics; which being founded upon the former ſuppoſition, that there is no Governour of the World, that alone for ever takes away the Obligation of all the Laws of Nature.

For though he afterwards in his contradictory way to himſelf, would, when men have entered into compacts, bring them all under the Laws of Juſtice, yet as he goes about to eſtabliſh them, he would have them bind without any Sanction, that is, without any power of binding. For having no Obligation but by vertue of mutual Compact, and this mutual Compact being entered into only for private Intereſt, as every man

for

for that reaſon may obſerve them, ſo for the ſame Reaſon whenever he apprehends it beneficial to himſelf, he is obliged, as he will be true to his Fundamental Principle of Self-Intereſt, to break them.

So that the Laws of Nature, as he has founded them, are but ſo many Artifices of Craft and mutual Hypocriſie, whereby mankind pretend and profeſs faithful Obedience to the Rules of Juſtice, and a ſincere endeavour to procure the good and welfare of the Community, yet every man reſolves inwardly within himſelf, that he will do neither, but meerly when it tends to his private Advantage, and ſo he can any way advance that, what cares he what miſchief he does either to the Private or Public Intereſt of all the men in the world beſide: An honorable account this of Mr. *Hobbs* his honeſty. But of his Notions of Natural Religion I ſhall not here diſcourſe any farther, finding it done more largely elſewhere, and therefore I have here made this brief repreſentation of it only, that I might give at one view a complete account of the *Hobbian* Religion. But our preſent buſineſs

ſineſs is to enquire into his Principles concerning the Church of *England*, or rather the Chriſtian Church, the Church of *England* being nothing but that part of it, that is planted in the Kingdom of *England*. And here all his Notions of the Church are reſolved into one Fundamental Principle, that the Sovereign Power in every Common-Wealth is the ſole Founder of all revealed Religion, and that whatever pretences, true or falſe, may be made to Divine Revelation, they can have no Obligatory Power, unleſs they can obtain it from the Sovereign Authority, and if they can, then whether true or falſe, they are of equal Force and Obligation to the Conſciences of men. Which is in expreſs words to affirm that all revealed Religion is no Religion. And yet he is every where ſo plain and peremptory in this rank aſſertion, which concludes our Bleſſed Saviour a profligate Impoſtor, that I can not but charge it as a reproach upon the Church of *England*, that ſuch open Blaſphemy ſhould be ſuffered ſo long to paſs ſo freely without Cenſure or Puniſhment. For having firſt been ſo impudent as to define

define all Religion to be nothing elſe than the allowance of ſome Public Tales, from thence he proceeds in his Mathematical method to inform us, that the Chriſtian Religion neither is nor can be of any Authority in any Common-Wealth, otherwiſe than as it is owned and ratified by the Supream Secular Powers: ſo that if *Cromwel* or any other Sovereign Prince be pleaſed to command his Subjects only to renounce their Saviour and their Chriſtian Faith and declare themſelves *Jews* or *Mahumetans*, in that Caſe they are indiſpenſably bound to Obedience, in that it is not poſſible for the Chriſtian or any other Law to have any binding force than what it receives from the Arbitrary Power of the Civil Magiſtrate. And agreeable to that General Propoſition the Philoſopher is pleaſed to inform us, that the whole Power of inſtructing the people in any Religion is derived from the Sovereign Prince. That the Subjects of every Common-Wealth ought to receive every thing as the Law of God that the Civil-Laws declare to be ſo. That by the Doctrine which the Sovereign commands to be taught we are

Leviath. c. 23. p. 1.

c. 26.

c. 35.

are to examine and try the Truths of those Doctrines, which pretended Prophets, with Miracle or without, shall at any time pretend to advance. That *Moses* made the Scripture Canonical, as civil Sovereign of the Common-wealth. c. 42.

That our Saviour gave his Apostles power to Preach and Baptise in all parts of the World, supposing they were not by their own lawful Sovereign forbidden. ib. p. 311.

That the new Testament had not the force of Law, till it received it from the Authority of *Constantine* the Great. ibid.

That the civil Magistrate has originally in himself, and by vertue of his Sovereign Supremacy a power of ordaining Priests and administring Sacraments. ibid.

That Christian Kings are the only Pastors of the Christian Church, and that the faith of all their Subjects depends only upon their Authority. c. 43.

And he is so entirely possessed with this notion of Kingly power, that he allows no other Authority to God himself. And thus when he appoints the punishment of death to false Prophets, because they tempt the People to revolt from the Lord their God: These words (he tells us) *to revolt from the Lord your God* c. 32.

are equivalent to *revolt from your King*; for they had made God their King by Pact at the foot of Mount *Sinai*. So that had they not obliged themselves by that Covenant, it had been no sin to worship other Gods, *i. e.* it is all one in it self to worship the true and to worship false Gods, which is plainly to say, there is none at all. And as for the worship they paid to the God of *Israel*, it was not due to him as Sovereign of the Universe, but only as their King by Pact; and so is no more than what every Subject owes to his Sovereign. And therefore he in expres terms defines the Kingdom of God to be a civil Kingdom, and to this purpose he expounds the *third* Commandment, That they should not take the name of God in vain; that is, that they should not speak rashly of their King, nor dispute his Right, nor the Commissions of *Moses* and *Aaron* his Lieutenants. And this was the end of our Saviours coming into the World to restore unto God by a new Covenant the Kingdom, which being his by the old Covenant had been cut off by the Rebellion of the *Israelites* in the Election of *Saul*. And the same account he

c. 35.

c. 42.

ibid.

he gives of Chriſtianity it ſelf; that it is only receiving our Saviour for King. So that when St. *Paul* ſays to the *Galatians*, *That if himſelf, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Goſpel to them, than he had preached, let him be accurſed.* That Goſpel was, that Chriſt was King, ſo that all Preaching againſt the power of the King received, in conſequence to theſe words is by St. *Paul* accurſed; for his ſpeech is addreſſed to thoſe, who by his Preaching had already received Jeſus for the Chriſt, that is to ſay, for King of the *Jews*. So that it ſeems we owe no other duty to our Saviour than if he had been only a temporal *Meſſias*, ſeeing all that is due to him is only by vertue of that covenant, whereby we receive him for our King. Neither is this Kingdom of his preſent, but is to be eſtabliſhed upon the Earth after the general Reſurrection, and therefore by vertue of that Pact that the faithful make with him in Baptiſm, they are only obliged to obey him for King, whenſoever he ſhall be pleaſed to take the Kingdom upon him. c. 32. c. 42.

Now barely to repreſent this Train of abſurdities is more than enough to

confute them, in that they all reſolve into this one groſs Contradiction: That for the ends of Government we are obliged to believe and obey the Chriſtian Religion as the Law of God: And for the ſame ends of Government, we are to underſtand that we owe no other Obedience to it, than as it is injoyn'd by the Law of man. But though ſuch manifeſt Trifles deſerve not the civility of being confuted; yet it is fit to let Mr. *Hobbs* his credulous Diſciples (and in all my Converſation I never met with a more ignorant or confident Credulity) underſtand after what a chiſdiſh rate their mighty Maſter of Demonſtration proves theſe, and indeed every thing elſe; For he has but one way of proving all things: Firſt, to define his own Opinion to be true, and then by vertue of that Definition prove it to be ſo. And for an undenyable proof of this, we will take a review of all the forementionʼd propoſitions, where we ſhall find all his Mathematical Demonſtrations to be nothing elſe but ſo many Poſitive and Dogmatical Tautologies. Thus when he proves there can be no firſt Mover, becauſe he has already de-

fined

ſined, that nothing can move it ſelf, from whence it demonſtratively follows, that all motion muſt be Eternal; for otherwiſe, if we aſſert an Eternal firſt cauſe, we run upon that deſperate abſurdity that ſomthing may move it ſelf. He had argued full as Mathematically, that nothing can move it ſelf, becauſe I ſay nothing can move it ſelf. So again when he proves that God is neither the Univerſe, nor a part of it, nor ſomthing beſide; he had argued as well, had he ſaid, That there is no Being diſtinct from the Fabrick of the World, becauſe there is none. So again thoſe Books only can be Law in every Nation, that are eſtabliſht for ſuch by the Sovereign Authority; becauſe a Law, as I have already defined it, is nothing elſe than the Command of that man, or Company of men that have the Supreme Power in every Common-wealth, from whence, ſays he, it unavoidably follows that nothing can be a Law, but what is Enacted by the Sovereign Power. And ſo it would have followed as unavoidably, if he had only ſaid, That the Sovereign only can make Law, becauſe the Sovereign only can make Law. And yet upon this one

mighty Demonſtration are built all the other bold aſſertions, that I have collected out of his Books, that the Sovereign Prince is Sovereign Prophet too, that he is ſole Paſtor to the People of his Kingdom, that he has the only Power of ordaining Prieſts, and interpreting Scripture; That *Moſes* and *Conſtantine* by vertue of their Kingly Power made the Scriptures Canonical and all the reſt, which is no more than to ſay, That there can be no Law of God, becauſe there can be no Law beſide the Law of man. And therefore it is needleſs to purſue them ſingly, only I cannot but obſerve that when he makes teaching any Doctrin againſt the Will of the Sovereign Prince, to be a certain ſign of a falſe Prophet; he has obtain'd his deſign of inſinuating, that both *Moſes* and our *Saviour* were manifeſt Impoſtors, in that they both proceeded contrary to the Commands of the preſent Powers, and that is the true Account of Mr. *Hobbs* his Religion: That though they were indeed Impoſtors and Rebels to the State, yet having had the Fortune to gain Authority in the World, and being own'd by the Laws of Chriſtendom, they

they ought to be acknowledged by all men as Divine Perſons as they pretended to be. And as his honourable notion of mankind was, that notwithſtanding all their pretences to Juſtice and Honeſty, they were only a pack of diſſembling Knaves; ſo his notion of a Chriſtian Church is nothing elſe than an aſſociation of Atheiſtical Hypocrites profeſſing Chriſtianity, but not believing it. He had better have ſaid, that there is no Church at all. And ſo when he tells us that it is lawful for a good Chriſtian to deny his Chriſtian Faith when his Sovereign commands him; he had better have expreſly ſaid, that there is no ſuch thing as a good Chriſtian at all. For the Reaſon he gives that profeſſion with the Tongue is but an outward thing, and no more than any other Geſture, whereby we ſignifie our Obedience, which may be honeſtly done, ſo we hold firmly in the heart the Faith of Chriſt; this Liberty, if once allowed, would authorize all the Villany in the world; for Perjury it ſelf is but an external thing, and will by this means become lawful, ſo a man believe in his heart the contrary to what he ſays with his mouth. But

when to this he adds, that indeed such Persons as have a calling to Preach, are obliged, if called to it, to suffer Martyrdom for their Religion, but none other, no more being required of private Christians but their own Faith; He little considers that by this new kind of priviledge, that he out of his great kindness grants the Clergy, he has contradicted his whole design. For if they may lawfully persist to death in Preaching the Gospel contrary to the Commands of the civil Sovereign; then the case is plain, that all Subjects are not bound to profess that Religion which the Sovereign enjoyns, which once granted, the whole cause of *Leviathan* is overthrown. And as by this particular kindness to the Clergy, he has run himself upon a flat Contradiction to his whole Design, so has he renounced his Argument against Martyrdom. For when he proves that a Christian may deny his Faith, because profession is but an outward Ceremony; it is no more in a Clergy-man, and therefore as lawful and innocent in him as in any other. However they are very much obliged to him for this singular kindness and civility to them,

them, eſpecially at that time when they enjoyed this his priviledg ſo highly as they did at the time of publiſhing his Book. All the Orthodox Clergy being then treated with a more barbarous cruelty than the ancient Chriſtians were by any of the Heathen Perſecutors, great numbers of them being then ſtinking to death in the holes and bottoms of rotten Ships. And therefore when the Clergy were in that woful Condition, for him ſo impertinently to ſuggeſt, as he does immediately after; *That no man is required to die for every Tenet that ſerves their Ambition or Profit*; to ſpeak very gently, this was not done like a Gentleman. And Mr. *Hobbs* could not have taken a more unſeaſonable time to revile the Clergy than he did. For whilſt they were in Proſperity indowed with good Revenues, and entruſted with great Power, if he had fall'n upon them then, Envy might have been ſome ground for his Malice. But at that time when they were trampled upon by the very Scum of the People, ruin'd and undone, he could have no other Temptation to do it, but meer Hatred and Malice to the Function it ſelf. But however, though

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it be a fooliſh thing for any man to die for the Ambition or Profit of the Clergy; yet it was a truly noble thing both of the Clergy and others to ſacrifiſe their Lives and Fortunes in the Cauſe of their lawful Prince againſt Rebels and Traytors. And it will be an eternal blemiſh upon Mr. *Hobbs*'s Name and Memory, that when, beſide the general duty of Loyalty, he had received many particular Favours and Obligations from his Prince, he ſhould not only deſert him himſelf, but ſhould publiſh this Book on purpoſe to perſuade the whole Nation, that it was ſo far from being any way bound to adhere to their lawful Prince, that they were brought under an Obligation of Allegiance and Loyalty to the then brutiſh Uſurper; whom he flattered to ſo high a degree of Tyranny as to adviſe him to require of all men, not only a Submiſſion to his brutal Power, but an Approbation of all his wicked Actions, a thing ſo infinitely vile and diſhonourable, that it exceeded the wickedneſs of the Tyrant himſelf. Now men of theſe irreligious Principles are ſo far from being fit Members of a Chriſtian Church, that they

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are not worthy to live in any humane Society, in that they blow up the foundations of all Government, as well as Religion. For Loyalty or a ſenſe of duty to lawful Governours is founded upon no other Principle, than the Obligation of Conſcience towards God; So that thoſe men that ſet Subjects looſe from that, turn them looſe to Rebellion. And therefore, though the notion of a Deity be nothing elſe than an empty Doublet, an Hat, and a crooked Stick ſet up by Princes to ſcare fools to Obedience, it concerns them to keep thoſe men out of their Fields, who go about to deſtroy the Reverence of their Scarecrow. However theſe men are not to be admitted to any Diſputes about Church-government, who will not allow any ſuch thing as a Church, when the Diſpute proceeds only upon that Suppoſition. And therefore I ſhall leave them to enjoy the vanity of their own Conceits, and proceed to the ſecond Adverſary, who grants a Church founded by Divine Right, but no right of Government within it ſelf.

And as in the former we have ſeen the power of Ignorance joyn'd with Pride

Pride and Vanity, ſo here may we ſee the Impotency of Learning joyn'd with Prejudice and Paſſion. For this learned Gentleman has ſpared for no pains in this Argument, he has ranſackt all Authors, and all Languages to ſerve his Cauſe; he ſet aſide many years for compoſing his Work, and indeed ſeems to have made it the main deſign of his Life. And whatever firſt engaged him to undertake the Argument (and it is uſually reported that the Provocation was ſo very ſlight, that I cannot but think it beneath the Spirit of ſo great a man) he has proſecuted it with greater Zeal and Keenneſs than he expreſſes in other Writings. Nay, he cannot forbear upon all occaſions digreſſing into this Subject, inſomuch that this is the main matter of his Preface to his Book *de Anno Civili*, the Subject whereof, one would think, is remote enough from this Argument. And yet after all his expence of Pains and Learning, he has been ſo far from ſerving the purpoſe of his Deſign, that he has directly oppoſed it. And if he had only ſtudied to furniſh the Church with Arguments to juſtifie her Authority and Juriſdiction, he

he could not have done her more ſervice than he has done by this violent Attempt upon it. This, I know, cannot but ſeem a very ſtrange Charge againſt a Perſon of his Parts and Learning; but therein, I ſay, appears the ſtrength of Prejudice and Partiality, that it puts men beſide the uſe of their Natural Underſtandings, and hires them to ſet their Wits on work only to ſerve a Cauſe or gratifie a Paſſion. And when once a man has taken up a Falſhood to defend, the more Skill and Learning he ſpends upon it, the worſe it is; for when an Errour is but ſlightly maintain'd, the miſtake may proceed from Inadvertency, but when it is aſſerted with great Induſtry and long Study, that diſcovers the man to be under a ſetled and habitual miſunderſtanding. And when all is done, every thing will be True or Falſe as it is, whether we will or no. And if the Power of the Church be ſetled upon Divine Right, 'tis not all the Wit, nor all the Eloquence, nor all the Learning in the World that can unſettle it; the Winds may blow, and the Waves may beat, but they can never ſhake it, becauſe it is founded upon a Rock. For

a proof hereof I ſhall, firſt, give a brief Account of this learned Authors method of Diſcourſe; and then, ſecondly, in the ſame way of arguing, by which he endeavours to deſtroy the Original power of the Church, I ſhall undertake to make out a demonſtrative proof of its Divine Authority. Only I muſt premiſe, that whereas he treats only of the Power of Excommunication, that Diſpute muſt involve in it all other Acts of Government, in that they are all ſuppoſed by the Power of inflicting Puniſhment.

Now Mr. *Seldens* Account of the riſe of Excommunication is briefly this, that it was never eſtabliſht in the *Jewiſh* Church by any Divine Command; that there was no uſe of it, whilſt they enjoyed the Civil Power among themſelves; and therefore that we meet with no Footſteps of it till after the *Babylonian* Captivity; and that then and there it was firſt taken up among the *Jews* by Confederacy and mutual Compact. For being then deprived of all judicial Power, and zealous for the honour of their Nation, they covenanted among themſelves to puniſh all contumacious Offenders againſt their Laws and Cuſtoms by Excom-

Excommunication. Which consisted of two things, First, solemn Imprecation of the Divine vengeance. Secondly, Separation from their Converse, that partly by the fear of the Wrath of God, and partly by shame and modesty they might be brought to Repentance, which as it was no proper Jurisdiction, so it could take no effect not only against the will of the Sovereign Power, but of every refractory Offender, that might, if he pleased, despise their Sentence and in spite of it, enjoy the liberty of his own Conversation. And therefore to make the Sentence appear more terrible to the People, they expressed it in the same forms of Speech, in which *Moses* expressed Capital punishments, which is the thing that gave the Occasion to learned men of mistaking, as if the same Phrases had signified the same thing from the beginning, though the only intention of the *Jews* was thereby to declare, that they would no more own Excommunicate persons to be Members of their Society, than if they had been cut off from it by a sentence of Death; and that if it were in their Power, they would not spare to do it according to the

the Law of *Moſes*. That this ſentence related only to their Civil Liberties, and was no abridgment of their freedom as to publick Worſhip; and though the Offender upon whom it paſſed, was ſaid to be caſt out of their Synagogue, yet that is to be underſtood as it was their Court of Judicature, not their place of Worſhip, and ſo ſignifies Civil Out-lawry, not Eccleſiaſtical Excommunication. But though this Device was at firſt made uſe of in this caſe of neceſſity for want of more effectual Government; yet having once obtained the Power of cuſtom among them, when they were reſtored to their Country and Civil State they reſerved it among their Civil Penalties, and uſed or omitted, alter'd or abated its Exerciſe according to diſcretion, as is wont to be done in all other Acts of humane Judicature. That this was the State and Notion of the thing in the time of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, who took it up in imitation of the *Jews*, and therefore expreſſed it by the ſame forms of Speech, ſo that in their Diſcourſes it ſignified no other Separation than what it did among the *Jews*. That thus the Uſe of it continued till the

the open breach between the *Jews* and Chriſtians, and then the Chriſtian Church being wholly ſeparated from the *Jewiſh* into a Society by it ſelf, they enter'd into ſuch a Confederacy among themſelves, as the *Jews* did in the time of their Captivity, of inflicting cenſures upon ſuch as by their unchriſtian Practices ſhould bring ſcandal upon the Church. That this Power at firſt reſided in the whole Congregation, not in any particular Officer, and that thus it continued till the Ambition of the Biſhops wreſted it into their own hands, and for it pretended the Authority of our Saviour's Commiſſion. And ſo they enjoyed it till the time of *Conſtantine* the Great, who taking the Church into his Care and Government, reaſſumed this Power to himſelf as a natural Right of the Sovereign Prerogative; and ſo it deſcended to all his Succeſſors in the Empire, who, as appears by the Records of every Age, varied its Uſe and exerciſe at their own pleaſure. And as Princes came into the Church, this Right of courſe Eſcheated to them, and was accordingly challenged by them, as is largely proved by the Hiſtory of *Europe*,

and particularly of our own Nation. This is the ſhort Account of his long Performance; the ſum whereof is, That Excommunication had no Divine, but meerly an humane Original, and that it is no Eccleſiaſtical, but a civil Puniſhment, and therefore that it appertains not to the Church, but to the civil Magiſtrate.

Now to Anſwer, or rather Confute all this, I need only to repreſent, That the Chriſtian Church is a Society founded upon the immediate Charter and Command of our Saviour, whereby he has obliged all the Members of it to the open profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, and to Communicate in the Sacraments and all other Ordinances of publick Worſhip; which Society is ſo far from having the leaſt Dependence upon the Civil Power, that it was at firſt Erected not only without the Allowance, but againſt the Edicts and Decrees of all the Powers of the Earth; and ſubſiſted ſo apart from all Kingdoms and Common-wealths for above 300 years; all which time, though it borrowed no Force or Aſſiſtance from the Imperial Laws, yet by vertue of our Saviours Divine

Divine Authority it obliged all Chriſtians to embody together into a viſible Society. Which Obligation is not only diſtinct from, but antecedent to all humane Laws that require the ſame thing. And therefore in a Chriſtian ſtate men are not Chriſtians by vertue of the Law of the Common-wealth, but it is the Law of God that conſtitutes the Being and Formality of a Chriſtian Church. Now this being granted me, which cannot be denyed without denying the foundations of the Chriſtian Faith, the whole cauſe of *Eraſtianiſm* is run upon a palpable Contradiction. For if the Church be a Society founded upon Divine Right, it muſt have at leaſt as much Power of Government within it ſelf as is neceſſary to its own Peace and Preſervation; otherwiſe it is no Society, much leſs of any Divine Appointment. And if it be indued with a Power of Government, it muſt have a Power of inflicting penalties upon Offenders, becauſe without that the common ſenſe of mankind will tell us, that all Government is ineffectual. And then as it is a Society, ſo it is no civil Society, as appears by our Saviours own Declaration,

that his Kingdom is not of this World; and by the fundamental Principle of these men, that for that very reason maintain it cannot be indued with any juridical Authority. From all which, *viz.* That it is a Society, but no civil Society; that every Society must have Government, and all Government a Power of inflicting Penalties: what can more demonstratively follow, than That its Penalties are distinct from those that are inflicted by the civil Power; and if so, that then Excommunication in the Christian Church, whatever it is, must be something distinct from all civil Inflictions? So that methinks Mr. *Hobbs* his Notion is much more Coherent with it self, for whilst he allows the Church no Right of Society, but what is granted it by the civil Government; it is but reasonable, that the Power upon whose Charter it subsists, should retain to it self the Authority of governing it according to the Laws and Rights of its own Institution. But to derive all its Right of Society from God, and at the same time allow it no Power of Government, but from the State; is that gross Contradiction I charge them with, in that

that Society without Government, is no Society. So that this one Notion, That the Church is a ſpiritual Corporation, diſtinct from the Common-wealth, and antecedent to its being embodied to it, prevents and anticipates all the *Eraſtian* Arguments, becauſe that alone plainly infers, that it muſt be endued with a juriſdiction diſtinct from the civil Government. And indeed the main Diſpute depends upon this one Principle, Whether the Church be a Society founded by Divine Inſtitution? if it be, that alone veſts it with a Power of Excommunication; if it be not, it is in vain to ſtrugle againſt Concluſions, when we have once own'd the Premiſes, for then are we clearly return'd back to the Church of *Leviathan*, that ſtands uponno other Foundation than that of humane Laws. Now upon this immoveable Principle, I joyn Iſſue with our learned Authour, and ſhall wait upon him through all parts of his Diſcourſe, and through all Ages of the world, as he has divided them into ſix Epochas (1) From *Adam* to *Moſes* (2) From *Moſes* to the Captivity, (3) From the Captivity to our Saviour, (4) From our Saviour to

the end of the first Century, (5) From the end of the first Century to the Reign of *Constantine*, (6) From *Constantine* to our own Age; of all which he has endeavour'd severally to prove, that there was either no such thing as Excommunication in Use; or if there were, that it was a meer humane Invention. First, he undertakes to prove, that there was no such punishment as Consistorian Excommunication in all the interval from the Creation to *Moses*. For whereas it is the custom of some zealous men to fetch all things from the beginning of the World, they have here it seems exemplified this matter in the Fall of *Lucifer* from Heaven, in the expulsion of *Adam* from Paradise, and in the banishment of *Cain* from the Society of mankind. Now in answer to these, he replies two things, *First*, that these punishments were not properly Excommunication; *Secondly*, that if they were, examples are not enough to make a Divine Law. I will freely grant him both, and yet infer from hence, what is enough to my purpose. The necessity of Government to the preservation of Society, and of inflicting penalties to the

Cap. 11:

the preſervation of Government. When it appears from hence, that even God himſelf, who is endued with infinite Wiſdom and Power, has no other moral way, but this to govern the world. And that is all, that in this part of the Diſpute can be material to our preſent Argument; for the Diſpute being divided into two parts, Whether there be ſuch a puniſhment as Excommunication, and Whether the Power of inflicting it be appropriate to certain Officers of our Saviours appointment: I ſuppoſe no man ever pretended to prove that our Saviour at the beginning of the World inſtituted an Apoſtolical order of men for the government of Religion, ſo that here all the Controverſie that can be, is, Whether there were not an abſolute neceſſity of ſome juriſdiction in this, as well as all other matters of humane life? and for it we have our Authour's full ſuffrage, proving in his firſt and ſecond Chapters, that the ſons of *Noah*, and the Patriarchs, who lived before the Law, muſt have had their Courts of judicature, *tam circa Sacra quàm Profanà*, from the nature and end of Society, in that without this Power it muſt unavoidably

fall into diſorder and confuſion. *Utrum autem præfecturæ fuerint illis tunc temporis juridicæ, tametſi nulla omnino reſtarent earundem in ſacris literis alibive veſtigia, non magis eſſet dubitandum, quàm, utrùm in ſocietatem vitæ civilem coaleſcerent tunc ipſi, atque animalia, ut genus humanum reliquum, eſſent politica, rectèque ac honeſtè, pro ſeculi perſuaſione, vivendi rationem omnino inirent; atque ut Dubia, Lites, Controverſiæ cum effectu civili,* i.e. *judiciorum executione dirimerentur, ſcelera ac delicta cohiberentur, adeoque in Officiis contineretur quiſque ſuis curaret.* And therefore he makes all Government to be eſtabliſht by the Law of Nature, as being abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of all humane Society. Which if he would but have applyed to the caſe of the Chriſtian Church, it would have prevented the pains of all his enſuing Diſcourſes; for that being a Society of it ſelf, as founded upon Divine Right; and Power of governing it ſelf, being neceſſary to Society, what can be more evident from the nature of things themſelves, than that the Church muſt be endued with ſuch a Power? So that once ſuppoſing Society, that alone

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infers Government, and all the acts of it; and to this purpose our Authour observes out of the *Jewish* Doctors (if their Authority be to any purpose) that whereas there were six Laws given by God to our first Parents to oblige all mankind, the last was *de Judiciis*, for as much as without that, all the rest would have been ineffectual; thus whereas Idolatry and Blasphemy, which refer only to the Worship of God were forbidden by the two first, they could never have had the force of Laws among mankind, unless some Persons were indued with a power of judging of the nature of those Crimes, and inflicting punishments in pursuance of their Sentence, which he styles not only the Soul of Government, but the noblest faculty of that Soul, and the noblest act of that faculty. And therefore when our Authour disputes, whether the Christian Excommunication were taken from the *Jews* or the Heathen, and leaves the case doubtful, in that it was in Use among most nations, civil and barbarous, as well as the *Jews*, as he proves by a vast collection out of the Records of the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, *Arabians*, *Germans*, *Gauls*,

Gauls, *Britans* and others; his moſt proper concluſion would have been, That ſo univerſal a Practice could be derived from nothing leſs than the common ſenſe of mankind.

The two next Periods are from *Moſes* to the Captivity, when the *Jews* enjoyed the civil juriſdiction of their own Common-wealth; and from the Captivity to our Saviour, when they were either wholy deprived of it, or limited in its exerciſe according to the pleaſure of the Princes to whom they were ſubject. In the firſt interval, he proves at large, that they had no ſuch puniſhment as Excommunication ſtrictly ſo called, but that all Officers whatſoever were puniſhed with a loſs or abatement of their civil Liberties. But being deprived of the power of the Sword, or the civil Government in the time of their Captivity, they were forced, having no more effectual way, to puniſh Offenders againſt their Law by ſhame and diſhonour. As pregnant proofs, both theſe, of the neceſſity of Excommunication in the Chriſtian Church, as a modeſt man could well have deſired! For what can follow with greater clearneſs of Reaſon, than

than that, If the *Jewiſh* ſtate had no Uſe of meer Excommunication, whilſt it was indued with a power of reſtraining vice by the civil Sword; and that when it was deprived of this Power, it was forced by the meer neceſſity of the thing to make Uſe of this puniſhment, that therefore the Society of the Church having no Power of temporal coercion to puniſh offences againſt the Laws of the Society, muſt be veſted with ſome other power of puniſhment ſuitable to the nature and end of its Conſtitution? Otherwiſe it would be a Society founded by God himſelf, without ſufficient means to govern, that is, preſerve it ſelf. And if it have a Right or power of Diſcipline within it ſelf, that is the only thing that the Church demands, and that our Authour denies.

But of theſe two long Periods, the account as to our purpoſe is very ſhort; for as for the firſt, it is granted on all hands, That the Rights of Church and State were granted by the ſame Charter, and the power of Government veſted in the ſame Perſons; and therefore all their acts of juriſdiction carried in them, according to the nature of the Society, both

both a civil and Eccleſiaſtical Authority. Whereas the Chriſtian Church is of a quite different Conſtitution: It is a Kingdom indeed, but not of this world, indued with no temporal power, and inſtituted purely for ſpiritual ends, and therefore its Government (if it have any) muſt be ſuitable to its Inſtitution, diſtinct from that of the civil State, and enforced by ſuch penalties as are peculiar to the Society; the greateſt whereof is, to be caſt out of it, which anſwers to putting to death by the civil Sword. So that the different conſtitution of theſe two Societies being conſider'd, it unavoidably follows, Becauſe the *Jewiſh* Magiſtrates had a compleat juriſdiction in all things, that therefore the juriſdiction proper to the Church that has no civil Power, muſt be meerly ſpiritual; and if it have any juriſdiction proper to it ſelf, that is enough to our purpoſe againſt them, who ſay it has none.

As for the ſecond, that Excommunication was taken up in the time of the Captivity, meerly to ſupply the want of the civil Sword; it is as clear an Inſtance as could have been produced of the neceſſity of this, or the like puniſhment in all

all Society, where there is no other coercive Power. But here, by the way, though I do not doubt that this puniſhment was then firſt made Uſe of upon this ground, yet I muſt confeſs, that I am not ſatisfied of the Account that our Authour, and other learned men give of it out of the *Talmudical* Writers. For, beſide that, they all writ when their Nation was debauched with *Miſnical* and *Talmudical* Fables, than which it is hard to invent any thing more abſurd and ſilly; they, who were in compariſon but very modern Writers, had no other means of knowing what was done from the time of the Captivity, but from the writings of the Prophets, and the Hiſtories of thoſe times; and therefore their Reports can have no Authority, but as juſtified by thoſe ancient Records. And whereas Mr. *Selden* tells us, for the Reputation of his own Learning, *Si cui hic dubium forſan occurrat, utrum corpori & ſcriptoribus talmudicis hujuſmodi in rebus quatenus hiſtoricæ ſunt, id eſt quatenus in eis pro jure qualicunque Ebreis veteribus recognito atque uſitato traduntur, fides ſit habenda, eo ſcilicet quod corpus illud quo jam habetur contextum, ſcriptoreſque*

De jure nat. & Gent. l. 2. 2. Comment in Eutych p. 54. V. Scaliger de emendat. temp. l. 6.

que illi cæteri ſæculorum ſunt Templi urbiſ-que excidio recentiorum, is forſan etiam dubitabit de Juſtiniani ſeu Triboniani fide dum Modeſtini, Papiniani, Florentini, Alpheni, Proculi, Celſi, ejuſmodi aliorum, qui trecentis aut circiter ſunt Juſtiniano annis vetuſtiores, ſententias atque ſcita juris alibi non reperta. He might have obſerved that theſe two caſes were vaſtly different; for there were certain Records and Reports of thoſe famous Lawyers, which were conveyed by writing from age to age, as were the writings of other Authors. Whereas there are no footſteps of any Monuments for the Rabinical Fable; and as they have no ancient Authority, ſo they diſcover themſelves by their own fooliſhneſs, to have been the inventions of a very barbarous and degenerate Age. So that our Authour, if he would have found a parallel caſe, ought not to have compared the Talmudical Traditions to the Digeſts of *Juſtinian*, but to ſome of the old *Britiſh* Hiſtory (not to mention the Monk of *Viterbo*) who give us large Accounts of the exploits of their Country, and the ſucceſſion of their Princes from *Adam* to *Brute*, without any aſſiſtance

ſtance of former Records. And this I take to be the caſe of the *Talmudical* Doctors, in whoſe Reports there is nothing creditable concerning the ancient *Jewiſh* Church, farther than as it is confirm'd by the ancient Writers. And therefore I find no reaſon to accommodate their forms or cuſtoms of Excommunication to the old *Jews*, becauſe I find no Records of them older than themſelves. And for this reaſon I ſuſpect it to be a great miſtake in *Grotius*, and the learned men that follow him, who whatever they find in the *Talmudical* Writers concerning Excommunication, immediately apply it to ſome text of Scripture, as if it were originally taken thence. Of which (though it is not much material to my purpoſe) I ſhall give a brief Account. The *Talmudiſts* then had their degrees of Excommunication, ſome ſay three, Mr. *Selden* ſays but two, neither was it inflicted only by the Court of Judicature, but by any ſingle Perſon; and that either upon another, or upon himſelf; and that either waking or ſleeping. For if any man pronounced himſelf, or his neighbour Excommunicate, it was as binding, as the Decree of the

the great *Sanhedrim*, or if he only dream't that he was Excommunicate, either by the Court, or any private Person, it was as effectual, as if it had been done with all the formalities of Law. And as any man had power to Excommunicate himself, so had any *Rabbi* to absolve himself, and if a man were Excommunicate by the great *Sanhedrim*, he might be absolved by any three men whatsoever; with divers other ridiculous Formalities, which discover themselves to be meer inventions of the *Talmudical* Age, when all sense of Religion was run into idle and useless Pageantry. And therefore passing by all the rest as absurd enough of it self, I can find no Traces of their several degrees of Excommunication more ancient than themselves, and therefore I suspect them, not to have been in Use in the ancient *Jewish* Discipline. And though *Grotius* interpret several texts of Scripture by them, it is manifest that he brings his Interpretation along with him from the *Rabinical* Writers, without finding any ground for it in the Text it self, as will best appear by particulars. Thus that Text, Ezra 10. 8. *That whosoever would not come within*

within three days according to the counſel of the Princes and the Elders all his ſubſtance ſhould be forfeited, and himſelf ſeparated from the Congregation of thoſe that had been carried away; ſeems not to have any reference to the power of Excommunication, but only an exerciſe of that abſolute Authority that *Ezra* had received from the *Perſian* King, Chap. 7.26. *That whoſoever will not do the Law of thy God, and the Law of the King, let judgment be executed ſpeedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or to Baniſhment, or to confiſcation of Goods, or to Impriſonment.* Now the Proclamation in the 10. Chap. being in purſuance of this Authority, can ſignifie nothing, but firſt, an excluſion from the priviledges granted by *Artaxerxes* to the *Jews*, which, as things then ſtood, amounted to nothing leſs than Baniſhment, and then Secondly, a confiſcation of their Eſtates, and becauſe the Eſtates to be confiſcated were to be devoted to the ſervice of Religion, the thing is expreſſed by the word חרם that ſignifies Conſecration, as well Deſtruction. For whereas it properly and originally imports nothing but utter Ruin, yet becauſe in

moſt caſes, where the People were deſign'd to final Deſtruction, the Goods were reſerved and dedicated to the ſervice of God, thence the ſame word came to ſignifie Deſtruction and Conſecration. Neither does that Text of *Nehemiah* ſound any more to the purpoſe, c. 13. 25. *And I contended with them, and curſed them*, &c. which ſeem to ſignifie nothing more, than as *Grotius* himſelf expreſſes it, *Nehemiam gravibus verbis etiam cum iræ divinæ comminatione uſum in iſtos legirupas*, chiding with them ſeverely, and threatning them with the wrath of God. Much leſs is that of *Daniel* to this purpoſe, Chap. 12. 2. *And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth, ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt*, i. e. ſays *Grotius* of theſe latter ſort, *erunt alij in Nidui, alij in Cherem.* For ſuppoſing with him that this paſſage ought to be underſtood of the puniſhment of thoſe, who under the perſecution of *Antiochus* had Apoſtatiſed from the worſhip of the true God, yet there is no imaginable foundation, were not mens minds *prepoſſeſt* with *Talmudical* Conceits, to underſtand it of theſe forms

of

of Excommunication, eſpecially that of *Nidui*, which was not ſeparation, but only a keeping the diſtance of four paces from others, was certainly a very ſmall puniſhment for the greateſt of ſins among them, *i. e.* Idolatry. And laſtly, (to mention no more) that of St. *John* the 9. and 22. ſeems leaſt of all to the purpoſe. *That the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confeſs, that he was Chriſt, he ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.* Which *Grotius* expounds of *Nidui*, becauſe, ſays he, the ſecond degree of Excommunication was not inflicted upon the followers of Jeſus, till after the Reſurrection. But it looks very uncouth, that the great *Sanhedrin* who looked upon our Saviour as an enemy to *Moſes* and their Religion, an Impoſtor, an Apoſtate, a Samaritan, which was much worſe than an Heathen, ſhould deter the People from being ſeduced by him with no greater penalty, than of keeping four paces diſtance from their Neighbours; however when thoſe that were under it, were notwithſtanding admitted into the Synagogue keeping their due diſtance, they could not be ſaid to be caſt out of

it. In ſhort, when there are no foot-ſteps of the *Talmudical* degrees of Excommunication, neither in the Scripture, nor *Joſephus*, nor in the practice of the *Eſſenes*, nor in any ancient Record; we have no reaſon to believe it was then in uſe, but on the contrary, that it was not, becauſe otherwiſe, ſo obvious a thing could not have eſcaped their notice. The truth is, the plaineſt account we have of this thing, is from the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, as I ſhall ſhew when I come to that head, particularly from their cuſtom of caſting out of the Synagogue, which ſignifies diſcommoning Offenders, and is commonly expreſſed by the word ἀφορίζειν by *Joſephus* ἐκβάλλειν τοῦ πάγματος to caſhire out of the Society, of which we have an eminent inſtance in the third Book of *Maccabees*, where the *Egyptian* Jews excommunicated thoſe that under the Tyranny of *Ptolomy Philopator* had ſacrifiſed to Idols, accounting them ὡς πολεμίους τοῦ ἔθνους as no better than enemies to their Nation. This was the ſimple practice of this thing, as far as I can find in thoſe times, to expel them out of their Society, without variety of leſſer or greater degrees,

degrees, but whoever were excommunicate, were to all intents and purpoſes degraded from being *Jews*. But herein perhaps I am miſtaken, and whether I am, or am not, I am as little concern'd as my cauſe, to which I now return. And here all that our Author has to the purpoſe is, that Excommunication among the *Jews*, was only an abatement of their Civil, not their Sacred priviledges, which if true, would do very little ſervice to his Concluſion, that therefore it muſt be ſo in the Chriſtian Church, where there are no priviledges but what are Sacred, but the principle it ſelf is altogether ungrounded, without Authority, and without reaſon, and that too, though we underſtand it of his *Talmudical* Excommunication; for as he juſtifies the Truth of it by no Authority, ſo the reaſon he gives, is as good as none, *viz.* That thoſe under *Nidui* were admitted into the Synagogue. And ſo they were, as they were admitted to civil Converſation, keeping their diſtance of four paces, and from thence alone it is reaſonable to conclude, that as the ſentence proceeded higher, ſo it was raiſed in both kinds of puniſhments,

However there is one Argument to prove the *Jewiſh* Excommunication to be a ſacred, as well as civil Interdiction, and that ſo very obvious, that it is impoſſible that our learned Author could have overlooked it, had not his eyes been ſo wholly fixt upon his own Hypotheſis. And that is this, that they looked upon all excommunicate Perſons as no *Jews*, or as we cited before out of the third Book of the *Maccabees*, as enemies to the *Jewiſh* Nation; and then it is ſufficiently known to all men, That no ſuch were admitted to the publick ſervice.

And ſo we come to the Period of the Chriſtian Church, which is divided into three Ages, the *firſt*, during the time of our Saviour and his Apoſtles; The *ſecond*, from their death, or the end of the firſt Century, to the Reign of *Conſtantine*; The *third*, from the Reign of *Conſtantine*, down to our own times. And that Excommunication in the firſt age of the Church, was of the ſame nature with that of the *Jews*, our learned Author demonſtrates, becauſe our Saviour and his Apoſtles practiſed it in imitation of their Diſcipline. Though for my part, I cannot underſtand how any thing

thing can follow more plainly than that Excommunication, if it were a civil puniſhment among the *Jews*, muſt be meerly Sacred among the Chriſtians. For if the *Jews* took it up, as our Author will have it, only to ſupply their want of civil Government, it muſt therefore, as he rightly infers, be uſed by them as a civil Penalty. Then when our bleſſed Saviour inſtituted the ſame in his Church, it muſt not be a civil, but a ſacred Penalty, becauſe his Church is no civil, but a ſacred Society. If indeed Chriſtians, as Chriſtians confederated together to maintain their ſecular Intereſts, that would make temporal puniſhments neceſſary to the preſervation of their Confederacy. But when they enter into a Society, purely to enjoy ſome ſpiritual Rights and Priviledges, then all ſeparation from the Society by way of Puniſhment, can be nothing elſe than debarring them from thoſe Rights and Priviledges. So that if Excommunication among the *Jews* was, as our Author contends, the ſame with Out-lawry as to their civil Rights, what can be more evident than that it can be no ſuch thing among Chriſtians, becauſe as ſuch

they have no civil Rights to loſe. And for this reaſon, whereas he concludes, that becauſe Excommunication was taken up into the Chriſtian Church in imitation of the *Jewiſh* Diſcipline, that therefore it was the ſame, if he had conſider'd things inſtead of words, he would have been ſo far from making his own Concluſion, that he would have concluded that, if one were civil, the other was not. So that when our Saviour eſtabliſhed the Cuſtoms of his Country in his Church, it is manifeſt from the nature of his Church, which was a ſpiritual Kingdom, that he never intended it ſhould be exerciſed in any other matters, than what were peculiar to his Religion; or if he did, that he loſt his Intention. And therefore it ſeems no better than meer obſtinacy in our Author, to inſiſt upon it ſo importunately, that Excommunication in the Chriſtian Church muſt be the ſame with the *Jewiſh*, becauſe borrowed from it, when for that reaſon alone it muſt be different, becauſe ſo were the Societies, to which they related. And he might as well have argued that the Chriſtian Baptiſm was the ſame with that of the

Jews,

Jews, becauſe it is the form of *Proſelytiſm* in both, whereas by one men become *Jews*, by the other Chriſtians. And of the ſame nature is Excommunication, for as by that we are admitted into the Church, ſo by this are we caſt out of it. And whereas our Author will have it to have been the ſame thing both among *Jews* and Chriſtians, becauſe it is expreſſed by the ſame Phraſes, it is as abſurd, as if he ſhould go about to prove that no man can be baniſht out of *England*, becauſe he may be baniſht out of *France*, for though baniſhment out of both Kingdoms be the ſame puniſhment, yet were their baniſhments out of different Kingdoms: ſo by Excommunication among the *Jews* (paſſing Mr. *Seldens* account of it) were men caſt out of the Common-wealth, and all the Rights of it, and among the Chriſtians out of the Church, and all the benefits belonging to it. And therefore, unleſs he could prove that there is no difference between the Chriſtian Church, and *Jewiſh* Common-wealth, it is in vain for him to inſiſt thus weakly upon the ſignification of words, for that is determined by the nature of things, and therefore

where

where they are different, there is no avoiding it, but that the words by which they are expreſſed, muſt ſignifie different things.

But this being premiſed, our Author divides his Diſcourſe into two parts, Firſt, to enquire what was the uſe of Excommunication in the Apoſtolical Age; Secondly, upon what right it was founded; as for the firſt, he alledges ſeveral Texts of Scripture, as Gal. 1. 8. *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be* Anathema. 1 Cor. 16. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be* Anathema, Maran Atha. But to what purpoſe this, is paſt my Comprehenſion: For the only deſign of the Argument, is to prove that the Apoſtolical Excommunication was meerly *Jewiſh*, as he had before proved that the *Jewiſh* was meerly civil. Now can any man imagine that ſuch dreadful Curſes as theſe ſhould ſignifie no more than a ſeparation from Neighbours Commerce? eſpecially, when it is evident, that St. *Paul* ſtrain'd for the higheſt expreſſions of miſery; and therefore to heighten his ſenſe, he

ſuppoſes

ſuppoſes an impoſſible thing, that an Angel from Heaven ſhould teach a falſe Religion, which, ſays he, if he ſhould, let him be *Anathema*, *i. e.* ſays our Authour keep him not Company, a dreadful puniſhment to an Angel. As for the ſecond Text, it is ſo high a Curſe, that all Authors are at a loſs for its meaning, though among all the Conjectures about the ſignification of *Maranatha*, I think none more probable than that of *Grotius*: *Eâ voce oratur Deus ut quamprimum talem maleficum & ſeductorem tollat ex hominum numero.* It was a caſting out of the Church attended with a prayer to Almighty God to take the Offender out of the World; which was rarely done, and only in ſuch caſes, as is here ſuppoſed, when men were not only wicked, but powerful Agents, and Inſtruments of Wickedneſs; as in the caſe of *Julian*, whom the Chriſtian Church did not only Excommunicate for his Apoſtaſie, but becauſe, beſide that he ſet himſelf to deſtroy Chriſtianity, they prayed to God, that for its preſervation he would ſpeedily remove him out of the World. But whatever it ſignified, it was ſomething more than a

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meer Reſtraint of familiar Converſation, or it was nothing at all. For what puniſhment could it be to any man, who diſown'd Chriſtianity to be deprived of the Converſation of Chriſtians, in an heathen City, where the Religion was a Novelty, and when their Company was ſo far from being deſirable, that it could only expoſe a man to contempt and ſcorn? But however, granting this ſlender Interpretation of theſe Texts, what can be more abſurd, than that the Apoſtle only by vertue of a *Jewiſh* Power, ſhould Excommunicate all that oppoſed our Saviours Religion, both when he had no ſuch Power, and when the *Jews* were the main enemies that oppoſed it? And yet that is the only thing that our Author undertakes in this Chapter, That there was then no Excommunication in the Chriſtian Church, but by vertue of the *Jewiſh* Authority.

The laſt inſtance of Apoſtolical Practice, is St. *Pauls* proceeding againſt the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, which, one would think is as clear a Precedent, of Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction, as could have been left upon Record. And yet this muſt be rejected as a miraculous and extraordinary

nary caſe, and is not to be underſtood for the power of Excommunication, but for the then Apoſtolical power of inflicting Diſeaſes, though nothing can be expreſſed in plainer words, than St. Pauls commanding the Corinthians, *to put ſuch an one from among them*, for what elſe can that ſignifie than to expel him their Society? And what if any miraculous Effect followed it? that was not the puniſhment which the Apoſtle injoyn'd the *Corinthians* to inflict upon the Offender, for they were not, as is agreed on all hands, endued with any ſuch Power. But all that he required of them, was to caſt him out of their Church, and therefore in his ſecond Epiſtle upon the offending parties Repentance, he counſels them to reſtore him, 2 *Cor.* 2. And that, whatever *delivering to Satan* may otherwiſe import, was all the Juriſdiction they exerciſed, as gather'd together in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Apoſtles Spirit, and if any extraordinary inflictions enſued upon this ſentence, that was only a Divine Ratification of the Churches decree. But when upon this occaſion, the Apoſtle enjoyns the *Corinthians*

thians not to accompany, no not ſo much as to eat with ſcandalous Offenders, that ſays our Author, ſignifies no more than *Davids* ſaying, *Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the wicked:* And *I have not ſat with vain perſons, neither will I go with diſſemblers*; this brought no alteration upon the ſtate of Offenders, but only ſignifies the Reſolution of particular men, as to their Converſation. It is very true, that a mans Reſolution is his Reſolution; but then a Command too is a Command; And that, whatever *Davids* caſe was, is the caſe here, where St. *Paul* commands them in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by his Apoſtolical Authority to expel all wicked pretenders to Chriſtianity out of their Society. And that, it is plain, was a manifeſt change of their ſtate in the Chriſtian Church, or the ſame thing with Excommunication.

Pſal. 1. 1.

Pſ. 26. 4.

But this for the *Uſage*; as for the *Right*, our Author will allow none, but what was purely *Judaical* or *Imperial*, and this he proves very largely, both becauſe at firſt all Chriſtians were *Jews*, and none elſe were admitted into the Church, but *Jewiſh* Proſelytes, ſo that

that notwithſtanding their Chriſtianity they continued the ſame national Intereſt, and exerciſed the ſame acts of Government, of which Excommunication being one, it was common both to the Believing and Unbelieving *Jews*. That is his evidence of the *Jewiſh* Title to Excommunication; his proof of the *Imperial*, is this, That the Emperors in their Edicts, by which they granted or abated their Priviledges, underſtood both *Jews* and Chriſtians, and therefore by vertue of their grants, the Chriſtians as well as *Jews* enjoyed their old power of Excommunication. But to what purpoſe all this, I muſt confeſs, I cannot divine: For it is true, that the Chriſtians and *Jews* then kept up the ſame National Intereſt, but what is that to Excommunication in the Chriſtian Church, which was both diſtinct from that of the *Jews*, and concern'd no civil Rights? And that is our only enquiry what that Excommunication was, that was peculiar to Chriſtianity. For when the Chriſtians continued among the *Jews* as to their civil Society, the queſtion is, that ſeeing notwithſtanding that they exerciſed this power among themſelves as Chriſtians, whether

whether that must not be distinct from the same Act as exercised among them as *Jews*. For (as our Author informs us) they were *Jews* to all intents and purposes, *Nisi exceptis rebus illis quibus à Judæis non credentibus necessariò atque è disciplinâ Christianâ singulari divinitus præscriptâ discriminarentur*, that is to say, they were *Jews* to all intents and purposes, but of Christianity. Upon such preposterous absurdities are men forced, when they will right or wrong maintain their own Prejudices. We are at great pains to prove that the Christians had no discipline by Divine Right, and that what they had, they had in common with the *Jews*, and now after all, we except only that which was peculiar to the Christians, and that too instituted by Divine Right. And thus I find that our Author is forced every where upon this Argument, to contradict his Assertion in a Parenthesis. Thus, Chap. 13. p. 494. *Quidnam ibi quo minus tum regimen circa tam sacra Christiana quàm prophana, publicum, tum ipsa excommunicatio, ut ante (causis tantum aliquot novis pro persuasionis discrimine introductis) utpote inter mores Judaicos illibata, undiquaque*

quaque ab illis exerceri, nec aliter debuiſſet. Our whole deſign is to prove, that there was no Excommunication among the primitive Chriſtians, but that of the *Jews*, nor none among the *Jews*, but what was purely civil, and now at laſt we except in a Parentheſis as it were by the by, all caſes that came in upon the account of their new Perſuaſion, that is to ſay, all caſes that concern the Chriſtian Church. So p. 207. *Et qui annis proximius ſequentibus è Gentilibus ſine Judaiſmi Proſelytiſmi Chriſti diſciplinam amplexati ſunt, Judæorum nihilominus nomine ita ſimul cum reliquis Judæis pariter veniebant eorumque diu juribus aliis non paucis ita utebantur, ut non videatur omnino dubitandum quin, inter jura illa etiam hoc de excommunicatione Judaica, quantum ad ſpecies ejus ſeu gradus (nam quantum ad cauſas, neceſſum erat ut aliter ſe res haberet, quod nemo non videt) pariter à cunctis ut ante pro re nata adhiberetur.* But if the cauſes for which Excommunication was inflicted in the Chriſtian Church, were (as the Parentheſis informs us) of a different nature from thoſe for which it was inflicted among the *Jews*, then without any farther diſpute, it is

evident, that the exercise of the Christian Excommunication was distinct from that of the *Jews*. So lastly (to mention no more) p. 225. *Nec disciplina illa apud eos alia quam Judaismus vere reformatus seu cum fide in Messiam seu Christum rite conjunctus. Unde Judæi omnimodi quantum ad hanc rem, in πιστεύοντας credentes & μὴ πιστεύοντας non credentes tribui solebant.* We are here proving that there was no discipline in the Christian Church, but what was in the Jewish state before Christianity, but now it is the discipline of reform'd Judaism, *i. e.* of Christianity. But passing by these humble concessions, or rather contradictions, it is enough to our purpose, that though all Christians were *Jews*, all *Jews* were not Christians; so that though the Christians enjoyed the same Rights in common with the *Jews*, yet they must have some Rights peculiar to themselves as Christians. *Non aliter* (as our Author expresses it) *atque is qui* p. 125. *Civis Romani aliusve Reipublicæ seu sodalitii alicujus socius jura pristina retinet, utcunque in persuasionem aliquam inter suos singularem pro libitu transeat.* In the same manner as a Citizen of *Rome* retains his former

former Rights, notwithſtanding he enters himſelf into any new Society; to which ought to be added, that the rights of the Society into which he enters himſelf, are diſtinct from thoſe wherewith he was antecedently veſted as a Citizen of *Rome*. And therefore all this long diſcourſe is quite beſide the purpoſe, that becauſe the Chriſtians enjoyed the ſame priviledges with *Jews*, that therefore they enjoyed none as Chriſtians, which is to ſay, that there are no Chriſtian Priviledges. And ſo is that of the Edicts of the Roman Emperors, who it ſeems knew nothing of the difference between Chriſtians and *Jews*. What then, was there none becauſe the enemies or ſtrangers to the Church were unacquainted with its peculiar Conſtitutions? And yet here too our Author is quite beſide the purpoſe, not only in matter of Right, but in matter of Fact, as to the Authorities he alledges, the firſt and chiefeſt whereof is the Edict of the Emperour *Claudius* for the baniſhment of all *Jews* from *Rome*, by vertue whereof (ſays he) *Aquila* who was a Chriſtian was baniſht too; and very good reaſon, becauſe he that was a Chriſtian

was a *Jew* too, and if he was baniſht as a *Jew*, it is no matter whether he were a Chriſtian or not, when the Edict was made againſt the whole nation of the *Jews*. His other inſtance is out of *Celſus*, who objects it both againſt the Chriſtians and *Jews*, that all that great difference they made about their *Meſſias* was about a very trifle. But does Mr. *Selden* think that *Celſus* his Authority is ſufficient to prove it ſo? If he does, then I muſt confeſs that *Celſus* and himſelf ſeem to have been much of the ſame opinion, for he frequently tells us that the Chriſtians and *Jews* were the ſame men, only that thoſe were believers, theſe unbelievers, as if the difference were as inconſiderable, as *Celſus* made the coming of the *Meſſias*. But if his Authority be not ſufficient, as I ſuppoſe no good Chriſtian will grant it is, eſpecially in this caſe, then it's here alledged apparently to no purpoſe. And whereas he adds that *Origen* anſwers, that the *Jews*, who believe in Jeſus, do notwithſtanding live according to the Laws of their Nation, he ought to have added too, that they live according to the Laws of their *Meſſias*. For it was that great and ſacred

cred Law of the Goſpel that made a vaſt difference between a *Jew* and a Chriſtian, which was ſo great, that it was not greater between a *Jew* and a *Gentile*. But however, if there were any difference at all, it ſpoils all our Authors diſcourſe, that proceeds upon this only principle, that there was none, which is ſo abſurd, that it has all along forced him upon the forementioned cowardly contradiction, *viz.* That there was none but what was made by Chriſtianity.

But, ſuppoſe that the Chriſtians exerciſed a Juriſdiction among themſelves by vertue of the imperial Edicts to the *Jews*, as he tells us: what if they had never been authoriſed by any ſuch Edicts, would they have had no Authority to cenſure or Excommunicate ſcandalous Offenders? Did St. *Paul* proceed againſt the inceſtuous *Corinthian* by the grant of *Claudius* to the *Jews* to govern themſelves by their own Laws and Cuſtoms? If he did not, then he acted by vertue of ſome other Authority, if he did, then when any of the following Emperours reverſt this Edict, the Authority of St. *Paul* in this matter had ceaſed. What then became of the

Church when *Nero* presently after, forbad the exercise of Christianity, or any part of it in the *Roman* Empire, was not then Excommunication in the Christian Church an unlawful thing? No, says our Author, because this Decree was made against the Christian Church in particular, and therefore did not deprive them of those priviledges, that belonged to them in common with the *Jews*. But however upon this principle it is manifest that it debarred them of this Power as peculiar to the Christian Church, and then whatever Jurisdiction they exercised as *Jews*, they had no right of exercising any Discipline *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, as St. *Paul* commands the *Corinthians*. And then all the Ecclesiastical Discipline that was executed in the times of their several Persecutions was open Rebellion against the State. But beside, what if he had been pleased to reverse all priviledges granted to the *Jews*, then the power of Ecclesiastical Discipline must have ceased among Christians. And lastly, when he adds for his last reserve for keeping up a Discipline in the Church, contrary to the commands of the civil Power,

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the confederacy of the primitive Chriſtians, who obliged themſelves by mutual compacts and covenants to ſubmit to the Diſcipline of the Church, he ſhould have conſider'd that all ſuch confederations were upon his principles nothing leſs than conſpiracies againſt the Government. For if the Church have no right of exerciſing any Diſcipline within it ſelf, but by the grant of the Empire, then the grant of the Empire being reverſed, it has none at all. And thus has he fairly brought this confederate Diſcipline of the primitive Church, which he has contrived purely to avoid any Government founded upon Divine Right, into down-right Rebellion. And no wonder, when all Confederacies againſt the Commands of the Sovereign Power can be no better, unleſs, when warranted by Divine Authority.

And now it is no wonder, if after theſe Premiſes our Author begins his next Chapter with a Confeſſion, that it does not appear when the preſent form of Excommunication began in the Chriſtian Church. *Quandonam primo diſcrepantia ejuſmodi inter Chriſtianæ & Judaicæ ſeu vetuſtioris Excommunicatio-*

nis effectus inciperet, non quidem ſatis liquet. Sed ante Origenis *ac* Tertulliani *etiam &* Irenæi *tempora, juxta jam dicta, effectum, quoad Sacrorum communicationis negationem, inoleviſſe non dubitandum.* Though I ſhould have thought it a ſufficient proof that it deſcended from the Apoſtles when we find it in the Church immediately after them, and find no beginning of its Inſtitution, eſpecially when it could have no other, becauſe the Apoſtles challenging no Civil Authority, they could have no other power but a cutting off from the Spiritual Priviledges of the Chriſtian Church. And here I cannot but remark it as the peculiar diſingenuity of all the Adverſaries both of the Government and Governours of the Church, *i. e.* Excommunication and Epiſcopacy, that they will allow their uſage in all Ages of the Church but only that of the Apoſtles, and becauſe they imagine that in their time there are no demonſtrative evidences of their Practice, for that reaſon deſtroy their Reverence and neglect their Authority, whereas had theſe men the common modeſty of Mankind, they would revere them for their

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ſo ancient and Catholick Practice; and when with all their ſearch they cannot diſcover any later beginning of them, they would conclude it at leaſt a very fair probability that they deſcended from Apoſtolical Preſcription. And in our preſent caſe one would wonder that when our Author has traced this uſage both in the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches into the Age immediately after the Apoſtles, without being able to diſcover any other time of its firſt Inſtitution, how any man ſhould doubt of its Apoſtolical Antiquity. What Records can be more evident than the *Canons* of the Apoſtles, the Writings of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*, that lived in the firſt Century after them, and St. *Cyprian* in the ſecond, who do not only mention this Power of the Church as a thing then in common uſe, but ſpeak of it as an ancient Right derived from their Anceſtors. I ſhall give one Inſtance for all, becauſe our Author has the boldneſs to quote it, and yet to overlook the Conſequence, and that is out of *Irenæus*, who expoſtulating with *Victor* Biſhop of *Rome*, about his raſh Excommunication of the Aſiatick Churches,

ches, thus beſpeaks him, οὐδέποτε διὰ τὸ εἶδος τοῦτο ἀπεβλήθησάν τινες : never were any men Excommunicated after this rate: Upon which our learned Author obſerves *Excommunicationis uſus qualiſcunque ut ab anterioribus ſeculis illuc propagatus utrinque pariter tunc admittitur*, from hence it appears, that on all ſides the uſe of Excommunication was admitted as deſcending from the foregoing Ages, after this, could any man think it poſſible that when he had allowed this Teſtimony of *Irenæus*, who by his own computation flouriſhed about Seventy years after St. *John*, that he ſhould ever doubt of its being an Apoſtolical practice? Or could any man deſire to reduce his Adverſary to a greater abſurdity than is here ſo frankly own'd, that *Irenæus* who lived in the age immediately after the Apoſtles ſhould ſpeak of this thing as the cuſtom of former ages, and yet that there ſhould be no ſuch cuſtom in the Apoſtolical age? And of the ſame nature is his diſcourſe of the time when this power was firſt appropriated to the Chriſtian Biſhops, which he confeſſes to be altogether unknown, though he finds it in common uſe in the

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time of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*; and that is time enough to give it right to Apoſtolick preſcription, eſpecially when he does not ſo much as pretend to any Record that the Keys were ever in the Peoples hands. Neither has he any ground for this Imagination, but only his old conceit, that among the *Jews* every man had this power, and therefore among the Chriſtians. Whereas there is not the leaſt ground of ſurmiſe that there was any ſuch cuſtom among the ancient *Jews*, but that it was a meer offſpring of the *Talmudical* folly. Or if there were, yet it was too fooliſh to be admitted into the ſerious diſcipline of the Chriſtian Church; for of what uſe could it be when any man might Excommunicate whom he pleaſed, and when he might be abſolved from the heavieſt ſentence of the Court by any three perſons that he could pack together; ſuch ridiculous trifling is at firſt view too abſurd to be entertain'd in the Chriſtian Church. And as it does not appear, that the People ever exerciſed this power *de facto*, ſo neither does it, that they could ever chalenge it *de jure*, in that we do not find, that our Saviour ever veſted

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the Body of Believers in any Power of governing his Church, but on the contrary, that when ever he gives out his Commiſſions, he ever addreſſes himſelf to particular Perſons. And thus are we faln upon the main Controverſie, where we ought to have begun, and where we might have ended, but he that purſues an Adverſary muſt follow his motion, otherwiſe certainly the matter of right ought to have been determin'd before the matter of Fact, and therefore the firſt queſtion ought not to have been, whether the primitive Chriſtians exerciſed any ſuch Juriſdiction, but whether they received any Commiſſion from our Saviour for their Authority, which if either proved or diſproved would prevent the following diſpute concerning the practice of the Church, but ſeeing our Author is pleaſed to take this method, we ſhall tread in his ſteps, and thus he brings it in, that when the Biſhops had unwarrantably aſſumed this Power to themſelves, they juſtified their uſurpation by pretended Patents made to themſelves in ſeveral Texts of Scripture, as the Power of the Keys, and of binding, and looſing, *and if any man*

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hear not the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen and a Publican. And now to elude the true meaning of theſe and the like paſſages, what infinite pains has been taken by our Author and other learned men I need not repreſent, but whatever ſhifts men may invent, their true meaning diſcovers and clears it ſelf by this one plain and obvious conſideration, *viz.* That our Saviour had already ſet up his Kingdom or Society of his Church, upon which ſuppoſition all theſe grants can ſignifie nothing leſs than a donation of Power. Thus when he chooſes Officers under him, and gives the *Keys of his Kingdom* into their hands, what can that poſſibly ſignifie, but their Power of Government in and over the Society, eſpecially when it was ſo familiar a thing in Scripture to expreſs power by Keys, and our Author himſelf has obſerved it, and proved it by a multitude of Inſtances. But then ſays he, this Power of opening and ſhutting the Kingdom of Heaven is exerciſed by preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel, by adminiſtring the Sacraments, by admitting fit Perſons into it by Baptiſm, and by not admitting ſuch P. 237.

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as are unfit, and by retaining ſuch as are already admitted. That is to ſay, our Author will allow the Governors of the Church all other Acts of Juriſdiction, but only this one of Excommunication, notwithſtanding that it is evidently implyed in them all: Thus, if the Governours of the Church be entruſted with a Power of Judging what Perſons are fit to be admitted; then certainly, if they perform not thoſe conditions upon which alone they are admitted, it muſt be in the Power of thoſe who let them in, to turn them out. So plainly does the Power of Baptiſm infer that of Excommunication, and the Power of judging who are fit members of the Church infer both. So that the Gentlemen of the *Braſtian* perſuaſion would have been much more conſiſtent with themſelves, when they would not give the Church all the Acts of Power, if they would have given it none at all, for they are inſeparable. And therefore the learned and pious Mr. *Thorndike* has very judiciouſly obſerved, that the *Leviathan* has done like a Philoſopher in making the queſtion general, that is general indeed, though by ſo freely and gene-

Epil. B. 1. c. 12.

generouſly declaring himſelf, he has made his Reſolution more ſubject to be contradicted. But yet they that only diſpute the Power of Excommunication, as they are of the ſame opinion, ſo are they preſſed with greater difficulty, only they expreſs not ſo much of their meaning: for they are nevertheleſs to give an account what Right the ſecular Power can have to appoint the Perſons, that ſhall either determine or execute matters of Religion, to decide controverſies of Faith, to adminiſter the Sacraments, than if they reſolved and maintain'd all this as expreſly as the *Leviathan* hath done.

And in the ſame manner does the following Text explain it ſelf, *If he hear not the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen, and a Publican*; if we will obſerve upon what ſubject our Saviour was then diſcourſing, for though our Author to make the matter appear the more ambiguous, has given us a large Critical account of the words that ſignifie Church in all Languages; if inſtead of that he had only minded our Saviour's Diſcourſe, he muſt have ſeen that by the Church here could be un-

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derſtood nothing but the Chriſtian Church, this being one of the Laws whereby he would have the Subjects of his Kingdom to be govern'd. But our Author tells us that the Notion of the Chriſtian Church was not then underſtood, it being a thing to come, and it is not likely that our Saviour in a matter of familiar and daily uſe, ſhould direct them to ſuch a means as no mortal man could poſſibly underſtand. To which it is very eaſie to anſwer, that all our Saviour's Diſcourſes procede upon the ſuppoſition of the being of his Church. He began at preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, and all his Sermons and Inſtructions after that, are but ſo many Laws and Inſtitutions for its Government, and therefore our Saviour's Words are ſo far from being doubtful or obſcure, that they were not capable of being applied to any other Society, than that which he was now eſtabliſhing in the World. And whatſoever was the vulgar meaning of the word *Eccleſia*, yet when uſed by our Saviour, it can be applied to no other company of men but that of his Church, and it was ſo far from being then

Mat. 4. 17.

then a new word, or a new notion to the Apoſtles, that our Saviour had ſometime before uſed the ſame Expreſſion to St. *Peter: Upon this Rock I will build my Church*, which he promiſed him as a peculiar reward of his forward Faith. Now it cannot be ſuppoſed that our Saviour would make his promiſes to his Friends and Servants in unintelligible Language, and therefore it muſt be ſuppoſed that the Notion of the Chriſtian Church was an intelligible thing. But if this will not do, our Author proceeds, that this Text gives no juriſdiction to the Church, but only directs private Chriſtians how they ſhall behave themſelves toward Offenders; as if the Emperour ſhould have made an Edict, that if any Subject ſhould not ſubmit to the decree of his Prefect, he ſhould be accounted by his fellow Subjects as no member of the Common-wealth; this gives the Prefect no new Power, but only concerns the opinion of the People. Very true, but it ſuppoſes his old Power, and ſo if our Saviour had antecedently veſted his Church with this Power, this was no new grant but only a ſuppoſition of a former one; if he had not, then this

was their Patent, when he refers his Subjects to their Judicature. But whatever may be the Notion of the Church, what is there, ſays our Author, in the following words, *Let him be to thee as an Heathen and a Publican*, that ſounds like Excommunication, either in the Jewiſh or Chriſtian uſe of it? Nothing at all in the Jewiſh, for Heathens were never Excommunicate as having never been of the Society; neither were Publicans put out of the Synagogue upon the account of their being Publicans. But though Heathens were not Excommunicate Perſons, yet Excommunicate Perſons were as Heathens, and that is ſo plainly the meaning of the words that nothing but meer peeviſhneſs could have made the exception, and it is the ſame as if our Saviour ſhould have ſaid of an Apoſtate, let him be unto thee as an Infidel, and our Author ſhould have replied upon him, How can that be? When an Infidel is one that was never a Member of the Church, and an Apoſtate once was, And then as for the Publicans, though they durſt not at that time Excommunicate them for that reaſon, for fear of the *Romans*, yet it is notorious that they thought them worthy

worthy of it, and that they were eſteem'd as no better than ſcandalous Sinners, Heathens, and Idolaters. But this ſuppoſed too, it is no act (ſays he) of the Church, but every private man, who was hereby permitted to treat the Offender as a vile Perſon. But this act of his ſuppoſes the power of Judicature in the Church, for this advice relates to the known power of the *Sanhedrin*, that were wont to Excommunicate refractory Offenders, and thereby to put them into the ſtate of Heathen Men: And ſuch it ſeems was to be the Authority of the Apoſtles, who were the great *Sanhedrin* in the Chriſtian Church, as appears by the plain deſign of our Saviour's diſcourſe, when he refers all Chriſtians to their Judicature, and commands them that if any man be obſtinate againſt their Authority, every man ſhould look upon him as an Excommunicate Perſon, and by the ſentence of the Court reduced into the ſtate of Idolaters. But alſo by the words immediately following, *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven.* Which words plainly declare a Power of binding in the ſentence of the Church, and withall who the Church

is, *viz.* The Apoſtles or Governours of it, to whom our Saviour addreſſes his ſpeech, and veſts them, and them alone with that Authority in which he had before enſtated St. *Peter*, and promiſes to ratifie not the opinion of the People, but their acts of Judicature, when the People appeal to their Authority.

But neither, *Secondly*, (ſays our Author) can theſe words relate to the Chriſtian Excommunication, for what puniſhment could there then be in being accounted of as an Heathen, when a great number of the primitive Chriſtians were Heathens, or ſuch as came into the Church without Circumciſion. What in our Saviours time? did you not take a great deal of pains in the foregoing Chapter, to prove not only that then, but during all the time of the Apoſtles; all Chriſtians were *Jews*, but now it will ſerve your turn, the greateſt part of them were Heathens. But not to inſiſt too much upon ſuch weak pretences, it is certain, that in our Saviours time all that were not *Jews* by Circumciſion were eſteemed as Heathens, *i. e.* Idolaters, and vile Perſons, not fit to be admitted into their Church or Common-wealth, and there-

therefore it can be of no other Import in the Chriſtian Church: Our Saviour here accommodating, as he does every where, the known cuſtoms of the Synagogue to the Conſtitution of his Church, ſo that conſidering the vulgar manner of ſpeaking at that time, I cannot underſtand, if our Saviour had deſign'd to eſtabliſh this Power, in what other words he could have expreſſed himſelf with more plainneſs and leſs ambiguity, even to the capacities of the People.

Of the *Third* Text, Math. 18. 18. *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth*, &c. Though it is anſwer'd already as appertaining to the ſecond, our Authors account is briefly this, that the words of *binding* and *looſing*, are either to be taken in their large ſenſe of all manner of binding, but then it ſeems very ſtrange to expreſs one act of it by ſuch comprehenſive words, and it is like deſcribing the Ocean by a drop of Water, or the Univerſe by an Atom. Or if they are taken in the peculiar ſenſe of the Jewiſh Writers, they then do not ſignifie any Juriſdiction, but only declaring what is lawful, what not, or anſwering caſes of

Conſcience. To which I anſwer, that in whatever ſenſe the words are taken, they will include in them the power of Excommunication. In the larger ſenſe they ſignifie Juriſdiction, and all the parts, branches and appendages of it, and then the Power of inflicting penalties, which (as is well known, and our Author has often obſerved) gives force to all the reſt, is to be underſtood in the firſt place. And therefore he might have ſpared his wonder, that ſo large a word ſhould be taken in ſo narrow a ſenſe, when that narrow ſenſe neceſſarily infers all other things, that it does or can ſignifie. But however, to prevent this vain objection for the time to come, theſe words are not inſiſted upon as limited meerly to Excommunication, but as a general donation of Power, and therefore of this in particular, which is ſo conſiderable a branch of it. And that is it which we aſſert, that ſeeing by the Power of the Keys, the Scripture ſo often expreſſes greatneſs of Power, therefore the Power that is exerciſed by vertue of them muſt carry with it the full force of obligation: So that the words mutually explain each other,

for

for if by the Keys given in the Sixteenth verſe is ſignified Authority, then by binding and looſing, by which the acts of them are expreſſed in the Eighteenth verſe, muſt be underſtood authoritative obligation; for though the word binding ſimply put may not infer Authority, yet binding by the Keys, ſignifies the ſame thing as binding by Authority. And this would have prevented our Authors other notion (of which ſome learned men are ſo very fond) of binding only by anſwering caſes of Conſcience, becauſe, though binding alone may ſignifie only ſo much, yet binding by the Keys muſt ſignifie more. But it is notorious, that the word it ſelf no where in the old Teſtament ſignifies any other binding than by Legiſlative or judicial Obligation, and whereas it is pretended that in the Talmudical Writers it ſignifies only an interpreting of Laws without juriſdiction, it is ſo palpable a miſtake, that in them it can ſignifie nothing leſs than authoritative Obligation, when it is ſo evident that their Rabbies equal'd their interpretations to the Law it ſelf, and bound them upon the Conſciences of men, by vertue of

the Divine Authority, and under penalty of the Divine diſpleaſure. But however if our Saviour conſtituted his Apoſtles to be only Doctors and Caſuiſts, yet he has annexed Authority to their Office by the promiſe made at their Inſtalment, that whatever they bind on Earth ſhall be bound in Heaven, for I am ſure all binding there is Obligatory; ſo that it ſeems if they are Caſuiſts, they are authoritative Caſuiſts, and that is the ſame thing as if they were endued with proper Juriſdiction. And now having, as I ſuppoſe, ſufficiently vindicated theſe Texts, I cannot but remark it as ſome defect of Ingenuity in this learned Gentleman, to have wholly omitted one Text more, which he could not be ignorant to have been as commonly as any of the other inſiſted upon in this Argument, and if he would have taken notice of it, would have prevented his Evaſions. And that is St. *John*, Chap. 20. *v.* 21, 22, 23. *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghoſt; whoſeſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſeſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.*

Here

Here our Saviour gives his Apoſtles the ſame Power that he had received from his Father, and then for the diſcharge of it, the ſame Ability wherewith himſelf acted, and laſtly declares to them wherein lay the Exerciſe of it, and what were the Effects of it, forgiving and retaining of Sins, which anſwers to the power of Binding and Looſing in the other Goſpel. And this if attended to, would have prevented that poor ſlender Notion, that the power of Binding and Looſing ſignifies only the Office of Interpreting, or declaring what is lawful, what unlawful; for to retain, or remit Sins (as the truly pious and learned Dr. *Hammond* obſerves) will not be to declare one mans ſins unlawful, anothers lawful, which it muſt do if this interpretation be applied to this place.

After all this, it will be but ſuperfluous induſtry to ſpend pains upon our Author's Conceit, wherewith he concludes this Chapter, *viz.* That the Authority of the Church ariſes from meer conſent or voluntary confederacy, for beſide as I have ſhewn, that all ſuch Confederacies are upon his principles down-

downright Rebellion, it is manifeſt that if our Saviour appointed Officers over his Church and veſted them with a power of Government, that then he has brought all the members of it under an Obligation to ſubmit to their Authority antecedent to their own conſents. But though we had no ſuch clear evidence of this Divine Inſtitution, yet I am ſure we have not the leaſt footſteps in Antiquity of this confederate Diſcipline. He tells us indeed of Compacts and Covenants, that the Primitive Chriſtians are ſaid to have made among themſelves; but he could have told us too, that theſe Compacts were nothing elſe but the celebration of the Euchariſt, at which they were wont, as all devout men do, to renew their vows and reſolutions of Obedience to the Laws of their Religion. And this Confederacy, we all know, is founded upon a Divine Inſtitution, and not only this, but all other Aſſemblies for the publick Worſhip of God. To which all Chriſtians are bound by an Obligation higher than meerly their own conſent; and ſuch a Confederation we grant the Church ſtill to be, a company of men Covenanting among

among themſelves to worſhip God according to the Ordinances, and obey him according to the Laws of the Goſpel. But then they are bound by the Command of God, both to take this Covenant, and to keep it. And this is all the confederacy I know of (unleſs we muſt believe *Celſus* his Calumnies, for he too is quoted upon this occaſion) in the Primitive Church; ſo that whereas our Author every where compares the confederate diſcipline of the Chriſtians with that of the Jews in their diſperſions, it is manifeſt that the Jews had no other engagement beſide their own mutual conſent, whereas the Chriſtians were particularly obliged to enter into their Confederacy by God himſelf; and this difference is ſo manifeſt, that I ſhall ſay no more of it.

And now having thus firmly eſtabliſht the Churches Power upon Divine Right, that ſuperſedes all farther enquiry into the practice of after-Ages. For in matters that are determined by Law, all Preſidents are either nothing to the purpoſe, or to no purpoſe, if they are againſt the Command, they are nothing to the purpoſe, being only ſo many Violations

olations of the Law. If they are for it, they are to no purpoſe, becauſe they derive all their goodneſs and authority from the Law it ſelf, and therefore can give it none. Thus if the power of Excommunication be founded upon the Command of God, the contrary practice of all the Princes in *Chriſtendom* is of no weight againſt the Word of God; if it be not, the practice of all the Churches in the World can never eſtabliſh a Divine Command. So that the controverſie concerning matters of fact from the Reign of *Conſtantine* to our own Times, the matter of Law being already clear'd from our Saviour's Time, carries in it more of Oſtentation than Uſefulneſs. But becauſe our Author has been pleaſed to proſecute it ſo largely, and with ſo much learning and confidence, we are obliged to follow him, eſpecially when it is ſo notorious even from his own relations, that the whole practice of *Chriſtendom*, unleſs perhaps in ſome enormities of the worſt and moſt barbarous Times, runs directly croſs to his deſign.

Firſt then, he preſents us with many Inſtances out of the Imperial Law, where-

whereby the Emperors exerciſed this Authority themſelves, but to all this himſelf immediately gives a ſufficient Anſwer without making any Reply, *viz.* That ſuch Excommunications were meerly declaratory, whereby they only declared their deteſtation of ſuch Perſons or Doctrines, or rather declared their aſſent to the Sentence already denounced by the Church; for I do not find that they ever made any new Eccleſiaſtical Laws of their own, but only adopted the Canons of Councils into the Laws of the Empire, and added to the Anathema's of the Church, what civil Penalties they deem'd moſt ſutable to the Offence. The *Theodoſian* Code is an excellent collection of the Conſtitutions of ſixteen Emperours *ab Anno Dom.* 312. or the firſt Year of *Conſtantines* Converſion, *ad Annum* 438. when it was compiled by the command of *Theodoſius junior*, in all which I think I may ſafely challenge any man to aſſign one Law relating to Religion, that was not antecedently determin'd by ſome Council. Almoſt all the Laws of this nature are contain'd in the 16*th* Book under their ſeveral Titles, *De fide, de hæreticis,*

hæreticis, *de apoſtatis*, &c. in all which, whoever will be pleaſed to peruſe them, he will find that the ſeveral Emperors enacted nothing but meerly in purſuance of Eccleſiaſtical Canons, adding for the moſt part to Excommunication in the Church the puniſhment of Outlawry in the State. Thus for example, *Theodoſius* the Great, in that famous Eccleſiaſtical Edict, publiſhed by him in the ſecond year of his Reign, and the firſt of his Baptiſm (and therefore ſtiled by the Interpreters of the *Juſtinian* Code, *filiam primogenitam*) only eſtabliſhed the *Nicene* Faith. *Ut ſecundum Apoſtolicam diſciplinam evangelicamque doctrinam Patris & Filii & Spiritus Sancti unam deitatem ſub parili Majeſtate & ſub piâ Trinitate credamus.* And when the Year after, he publiſhed another Edict to the ſame purpoſe, he vouches his Law by the Authority of the *Nicene* Council, as may be ſeen *Tit.* 5. *de Hæreticis*, *Leg.* 6. So that his deſign was not to make any new Law, but only to abet an ancient Law of the Church with a civil Penalty, as he concludes his Edict, that Offenders againſt it ſhould not only be obnoxious to the Divine Vengeance

eance denounced by the Council, but ſhould alſo be puniſhed at the Emperors *pleaſure*, for that I ſuppoſe to be the meaning of *Motûs noſtri ultione plectendos*. But the moſt expreſs Ratification of the Canons of the Church, is that Edict of *Theodoſius* the Younger, to the Governour of the Eaſtern *Illyricum*, *Anno Domini*, 421. *Omni innovatione ceſſante vetuſtatem & Canones priſtinos Eccleſiaſticos, qui nunc uſque tenuerunt, per omnes Illyrici Provincias, ſervari præcipimus: Tum ſi quid dubietatis emerſerit, id oportet non abſq; ſcientiâ viri reverendiſſimi ſacroſanctæ legis Antiſtitis urbis Conſtantinopolitanæ (quæ* Romæ *veteris prærogativâ lætatur) conventui ſacerdotali ſanctoq; judicio reſervari.* Lib. 16. Tit. 2. L. 45.

'Tis not material, whether this Law refer to the Canons of the General Councils, or to the particular Canons of that Province, which is a Diſpute among learned men: For be it this or that, it is manifeſt that the Emperor deſign'd to follow the Decrees of the Church, and to refer Eccleſiaſtical Controverſies to its own judgment and determination. Having intimated this account of the *Theodoſian* Code, I need add nothing of the *Juſtinian*,

nian, becauſe it only repeats all the Laws of the former that were not obſolete, as may be ſeen not only by comparing the Books themſelves, but by that exact collation of their Titles and Conſtitutions, that is prefixed to *Gothofred*'s Edition of the *Theodoſian* Code. And as for his own Novels, he frequently makes particular reference to the Canons of the Church, challenging to himſelf a power of puniſhing Offences againſt the Eccleſiaſtical Canons by vertue of this one general Law, which he declares to have been the ſenſe of himſelf and his Predeceſſors, Δεῖν τὰς ἱερὰς κανόνας ἀντὶ νόμων κρατεῖν, *That the Canons of the Church ought to have the force of Laws.* And accordingly he begins his Laws, concerning Eccleſiaſtical matters, Θεσπίζομεν τοίνυν τάξιν νόμων ἐπέχειν τὰς ἁγίας Ἐκκλησιαστικὰς κανόνας: We enact that the Canons of the Church, *i. e.* the four firſt general Councils ſhall be received into the number of our Laws. And by that Edict alone, if there had been no other, they were all Conſtituted Laws of the Empire. And according to this Principle he declares in the Preface to his 83 *Novel* that he

Nov. 6. c. 1.

Nov. 131. c. 1.

he only follows the ancient Canons and Conſtitutions of the Church. And particularly in his 137 Novel, where he endeavours the reſtitution of Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, he only enjoyns the obſervation of the thirty ſixth Apoſtolical Canon, *viz.* That the Biſhops of each Province meet twice a Year for the more effectual Government of the Church, and this he profeſſes to do, not as Author, but as Protector of the Eccleſiaſtical Laws; and therefore in the Preface to this Novel, he challenges to himſelf τὴν ἐξουσίαν, the power of Legiſlation in reference to the Civil Laws; but in reference to the Laws of the Church, τὴν παραφυλακὴν, the power of Patronage, or Protection. This ſeems to have been the Conſtitution of the Church in thoſe happieſt and moſt flouriſhing Ages of it: whereby it appears that the Emperours of thoſe Times were ſo far from aſſuming the power of Excommunication to themſelves, that they would not ſo much as abet any matter of Religion with their civil Sanctions, that was not determin'd beforehand by the Spiritual Power. Whether they ever exceeded their own

bounds, I think not my ſelf obliged to enquire, they being lyable to that, as well as to other miſtakes and miſcarriages of Govenment. Though I remember not any inſtances of that kind till the latter and degenerate ages of Chriſtendom, when barbarity was introduced by the incurſions of the *Goths* and *Vandals* and other ſalvage Nations. It is enough to my purpoſe, that the Power of the Keys in the Church was acknowledged by the Chriſtian Emperours from *Conſtantine to Juſtinian*; and it is more than enough, in that whether they own'd it or not, it was ſetled by our Saviour upon the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors to the end of the World.

But ſecondly, Emperours, Kings and Princes have limited the Eccleſiaſtical Order in the exerciſe of this Power, and aſſign'd them either larger or narrower bounds of Juriſdiction, as they judged moſt conſiſtent with reaſons of State; by which they evidently declare what was their opinion of the cenſures of the Church, for if they had ſuppoſed Church-officers to have acted by a Divine Authority, they durſt never have preſumed to ſet bounds to the Power of God

God by their own arbitrary Decrees As if it were not poſſible for the Governours of the Church to go beyond their Commiſſion, and under pretence of a Divine Authority, encroach upon that power that God has committed to Princes. Which if they can do, and ſome have done, what affront is it to the Authority of God himſelf to reſtrain his Miniſters within thoſe bounds of Juriſdiction that he has preſcribed to them? Nay, is not this very thing a very plain confeſſion of a diſtinct Authority, when to limit a power ſuppoſes it? So that it is ſo far from being any Argument of their diſowning the Divine Inſtitution of an Eccleſiaſtical power, that 'tis a demonſtrative and undoubted proof of their acknowledgment of it. This being granted, I ſhall not concern my ſelf to enquire into the warrantableneſs of the ſeveral Precedents alledged, though moſt of them relate only to the reſtraint of dilatory, vexatious and uncanonical proceedings; for my only buſineſs is to gain the ſuffrage of the Princes of Chriſtendom to my Cauſe, for which I am no ways bound to prove them free from all er-

rours and miſcarriages of Government: ſo that if they might at any time bear too hard upon the power of the Church, eſpecially when the Church has given them too much reaſon ſo to do, that is ſo far from being any preſcription againſt its due exerciſe, that it is a declaration of theſe Princes that have been moſt unkind to it, that they own its Power, provided it be kept within its due bounds. But what the general ſenſe of Chriſtendom has been concerning the diſtinction of the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Powers, ſufficiently appears by thoſe great differences, that have been raiſed about the bounds of their Juriſdiction. And though the Chriſtian Emperours have of later times been forced from time to time to ſtruggle againſt the encroachments of the Biſhops of *Rome*, yet they never queſtion'd (that I know of) the divine Right of their Epiſcopal Authority. And therefore neither here ſhall I concern my ſelf to examine the particular precedents pleaded by both Parties for the advancement of their reſpective Powers, when it is certain that both Powers may, and often have exceeded their juſt limits,

mits, which yet is ſuch an inconvenience, that, conſidering the paſſions and partialities of men, is utterly unavoidable. And we cannot expect that God ſhould give ſuch Laws, as that it ſhould not be in the Power of humane liberty to break them, for then the Laws were given to no purpoſe; it is enough that they are ſufficient to guide thoſe, that will reſign themſelves to be govern'd with honeſty and integrity; and it is not in the power of Laws to effect more. So that it is a very frivolous objection, much inſiſted upon by ſome ill-minded men, that ſeeing the competition of theſe two Powers has been occaſion of creating ſo many miſchiefs and inconveniences to Chriſtendom, it were better that one of them were removed; which, beſide the bold way of arguing, that becauſe they think in their great wiſdoms that God ought not, that therefore he has not conſtituted two diſtinct Powers; it is ſuch an Objection that no conſtitution can poſſibly avoid: for which way ſoever the Government of the World may be ſetled, there is no remedy but that through the corruption and folly of mankind, it may and often will be liable

to abuſes. And particularly in this caſe there is no difficulty in diſcerning the bounds that God has ſet to theſe two Powers, if men would be honeſt and upright; and if they will not, it is no fault of the Law that they will break it: For Chriſtianity is wholly founded upon the Doctrin of the Croſs, which obliges them in all caſes, either to obey or to ſuffer peaceably. So that how great ſoever the Authority of Churchmen may be, there is no danger of its interfering with, or entrenching upon the Prerogatives of Princes, unleſs they miſuſe it; and if they do, as they go beyond their Commiſſion, ſo they deſerve their puniſhment in this life among the worſt of Rebels and Traytors, and are ſure to have it in the next. For as their Power is not only purely ſpiritual, void of all temporal force and coercion, ſo are they in the firſt place, and above all things forbidden to uſe any violence, or raiſe any diſturbance againſt Government. So that if any Prince think good to oppoſe them in the Execution of their Office, and to puniſh them for ſo doing, they are not to oppoſe him, but only to ſacrifice their lives in juſtification of their

their cauſe and ſubmiſſion to his will, and for ſo doing, they ſhall have their Reward. But if they ſhall make uſe of any other Weapons whatſoever, beſide Prayers, and Tears, and Sufferings, they then ſuffer deſervedly as diſturbers of the publick Peace: And ſo much the more in that they have been ſo expreſly forewarned by our Saviour, that whoſoever ſhall draw the Sword in his cauſe, ſhall be ſure to periſh by it. And as upon this principle he founded his Church, ſo upon it his Apoſtles built it, when in pure obedience to his command, they preached the Goſpel all the World over. And if any Prince were pleaſed to countermand them, they did not plead any exemption from the Government, much leſs did they Libel it, but only repreſented the Innocence and Juſtice of their Cauſe; and if he were not ſatisfied, declared their readineſs to ſubmit to his pleaſure and the penalty of the Law. And in this they enjoyed no other exemption from the Prerogative of Princes, than what is or ought to be chalenged by every private Chriſtian, who is indiſpenſably bound to make profeſſion of his Chriſtian Faith; and

if the Laws of his Country ſo require, to ſeal it with his Blood. This was the conſtitution of the Church, and the practice of it in its firſt profeſſion; and is the conſtitution of the Church of *England* in its Reformation. For whereas a foreign *Italian* Biſhop had for a long time uſurped wel-nigh all, both ſecular and ſpiritual Power into his own hands, and by an exorbitant abuſe of it had enſlaved the Prince and empoveriſhed the people only to enrich himſelf and his own Courtiers; they that were concern'd, after long patience and much provocation, at laſt reſolved (upon what motives concerns not us) to reſume their Rights. The King that Power which was exerciſed by the Kings of *Judah* of old, and by Chriſtian Kings and Emperours in the primitive Church; And the Biſhops that Power wherewith they were as immediately entruſted by virtue of our Saviours general commiſſion to the Apoſtolical Order, as any other foreign Biſhop or Biſhops within their reſpective Dioceſſes whatſoever. And to prevent all jealouſie in the Prince, leſt they ſhould play him the ſame game that his Holineſs had done, who *in ordine ad*

ad ſpiritualia, had finely ſtript him of almoſt all his Temporal Juriſdiction, by excepting all Eccleſiaſtical, both Perſons and Cauſes, from his cognizance. They therefore freely declare him Supreme Governour, firſt, *Over all Perſons*, ſo that no Eccleſiaſtical Subject might as formerly appeal from his Tribunal. And *in all Cauſes*, ſo that every Subject whatſoever was bound to ſubmit to his Decrees and Determinations, ſo far forth as either to obey his Laws, as long as he own'd and protected true Chriſtianity, as the Chriſtian Biſhops of old did to the Chriſtian Emperours. Or if he oppoſed it, chearfully and peaceably to ſubmit to their Penalties, as they did to the *Roman* Perſecutors.

And whereas from the Precedent of the Apoſtles in the firſt Council at *Jeruſalem*, the Governours of the Church in all Ages enjoyed a power of making Canons and Conſtitutions for Diſcipline and good Order, yet by the example of the Primitive Church, they ſubmitted the exerciſe thereof to his ſovereign Authority, proteſting *in verbo ſacerdotis*, as it is ſtated in that famous Act called The Submiſſion of the Clergy; "That

"they

"they will never from henceforth pre-
"ſume to attempt, alledg, claim, or
"put in ure, enact, promulge, or exe-
"cute any new Canons, Conſtitutions,
"Ordinances provincial, or other, or
"by whatſoever other name they ſhall
"be call'd in the Convocation, unleſs
"the King's moſt royal Aſſent and Li-
"cenſe may to them be had, to make,
"promulge, and execute the ſame;
"and that his Majeſty do give his Roy-
"al Aſſent and Authority in that be-
"half. Whereby they do not paſs away their power of making Eccleſiaſtical Canons, but only give ſecurity to the Government, that under that pretence they would not attempt any thing tending to the diſturbance of the Kingdom, or injurious to the Prerogative of the Crown. Which in truth is ſuch a ſubmiſſion as all the Clergy in the World ought in duty to make to their Sovereign, at leaſt in gratitude for his Protection, and that without any abatement or diminution of their own Authority, *viz.* The ſtanding Laws of Chriſtianity being ſecured, to ſubmit all other Matters to his ſovereign Will and Pleaſure. Whereby as they would bring no damage

mage to the Church, in that this power is exerciſed meerly in matters of Order and Diſcipline; if the Prince did not approve of their Conſtitutions, it would be no difficult thing to provide for Decency ſome other way; ſo they would bring great ſecurity to the State, when the Prince was aſſured that under that pretence, they would not (as the *Roman* Clergy had done) diſturb or undermine his Authority. And as they parted not with their Spiritual Legiſlative Power, ſo not with any other Power proper to their Function; as the Power of preaching the Chriſtian Religion, adminiſtring the holy Sacraments, and conferring holy Orders. Neither did any Prince in the leaſt ever claim, or exerciſe any of them. And becauſe the *Romaniſts* in the beginning of the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, made a mighty noiſe with this Objection, as if by virtue of her Supremacy her Majeſty had challenged a Spiritual or Miniſterial Power in the Church, the Queen has with great indignation diſown'd any ſuch Power, and defied the Calumny. And yet when ſhe had made her diſclaimour of any Spiritual Power in the

Church,

Church, ſhe parted not with her Royal Supremacy over thoſe that had it, as we are particularly inſtructed by our Church in her 37th Article. "Where "we attribute to the Queens Majeſty "the chief Government, by which Ti-"tle we underſtand the minds of ſome "dangerous Folks to be offended, we "give not our Princes the miniſtring "either of God's Word or the Sacra-"ments, the which things the Injuncti-"ons lately ſet forth by *Elizabeth* our "Queen, do moſt plainly teſtifie; but "that only Prerogative which we ſee "to have been given always to all god-"ly Princes in holy Scriptures by God "himſelf; that is, that they ſhould rule "all Eſtates and Degrees committed to "their Charge by God, whether they "be Eccleſiaſtical or Temporal, and re-"ſtrain with the civil Sword the ſtub-"born and evil doers. And laſtly (to mention no more) whereas the witty and learned Cardinal *Perron* run upon the ſame miſtake (and it is a miſtake that they all wilfully run upon) King *James* in his Reply, lets him know that though Chriſtian Kings and Emperours never arrogated to themſelves a power

of

of being Sovereign Judges in matters and controverſies of Faith; yet for moderation of Synods, for determinations and orders eſtabliſht in Councils, and for diſcipline of the Church, they have made a good and full uſe of their Imperial Authority. And that for this very good reaſon (that very much concerns all Princes) that they might ſee and judg whether any thing were done to the prejudice of their Power, or the diſturbance of the Commonwealth. And much more to the ſame purpoſe. And therefore for further ſatisfaction, I ſhall refer the Reader to the excellent Diſcourſe it ſelf. It is enough that I have given a plain and eaſie account of the diſtinct powers of Church and State, and ſhewn that whoever denies the diſtinction, diſowns Chriſtianity, that our Saviour has veſted his Church with a Power peculiar to it ſelf; that the Church has in all Ages exerciſed it, that the Chriſtian Emperours never denied it; and laſtly, that the Church of *England*, and the Reformed Princes thereof have remarkably own'd it.

But, *Thirdly*, *Conſtantine* and his Succeſſors took upon them the Title of *Pontifex*

Pontifex Maximus, to which according to the Conſtitution of the *Roman* Empire, appertain'd the ſupreme Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction. By virtue of which Authority they granted to the Church, among other Priviledges, this power of Excommunication, in the ſame manner as *Claudius*, and other Heathen Emperours, gave leave both to *Jews* and Chriſtians, to govern themſelves by their own Laws and Cuſtoms. And though the Emperour *Gratian* refuſed to wear the Pontifical Habit as a piece of Pagan Superſtition, yet it no where appears that he refuſed the Dignity it ſelf. And this Diſcourſe our Author proſecutes with much Zeal and Learning. But what do theſe men make of the Chriſtian Church, or rather of Chriſt himſelf, that he ſhould make no other proviſion for its Government, than to leave it wholly to the ſuperintendency of Heathen Prieſts? This is ſuch a wild conceit in it ſelf, that I muſt confeſs I could never have imagin'd any learned man could ever have made uſe of it againſt the Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church. And yet this learned Gentleman is not only ſerious, but vehe-

vehement and confident in it; he urges it over and over, and though he repeats every thing that he ſays, ſo that indeed one half of his Diſcourſe is nothing but a Repetition of the other, yet here he doubles his Repetitions, and every where lays this Principle as the foundation of the practice of all After times. But can any man believe that *Conſtantine* the Great took upon him the power of Government in the Chriſtian Church, if he really believed in Chriſt himſelf, by virtue of a Power derived from the Uſurpation of *Julius Cæſar?* Or that he could imagine that the Heatheniſh Prieſtly Power belong'd to him after his owning Chriſtianity, when by that, the whole frame of the old *Roman* Religion was declared to be Idolatrous? ſo that the *Roman* High Prieſt was nothing better than the ſupreme Head of Idolatry. An Honour certainly which no Chriſtian Emperour would be very fond of aſſuming to himſelf. *Julian* indeed challenged both the Title and the Dignity as the greateſt Ornament of his Imperial Crown; but the Reaſon was, becauſe he was ſo vainly fond of the Pagan Religon. But how any man

of

of common ſenſe, that had renounced Paganiſm, ſhould yet own himſelf High Prieſt by virtue of that Religion that he had renounced, ſeems too great a Contradiction for any man of common ſenſe to believe. But what if they accepted of the Title? (as our Author very well knows they did of Divinity it ſelf) or rather what if it were cuſtomarily given to them by others? For I met with no other Monuments of it, but ſome old Complemental Inſcriptions, ſo that it being a cuſtomary Title of Honour, it might eaſily for a time paſs in the crowd of the other Imperial Titles. For it ſeems it continued not long, being rejected by *Gratian*, who lived about fifty Years after the Converſion of *Conſtantine*. And though our learned Author affirms, that the pious Emperour only refuſed the Veſtment, but not the Dignity; it is very obvious to any man of much leſs underſtanding than himſelf, that the Emperour could have no reaſon to refuſe one but for the ſake of the other: for the Caſe is plain, that there was no ſuperſtition in the Veſtment, but only upon the account of the Office, and for that reaſon

reaſon there was little if any uſe of the Title afterwards.

But *laſtly*, the Power of Judicature was firſt granted to the Biſhops by the favour of the Chriſtian Emperours, and eſpecially by an Edict of *Conſtantine* the Great, whereby he grants the Biſhops a full Power of hearing and determining all cauſes Civil as well as Eccleſiaſtical, and withal declares their Decrees to be more firm and binding than the ſentence of any other Judicature, and from this great indulgence of the Emperour, it is not to be doubted but that among other forenſique penalties they made uſe of Excommunication. Of the inference I ſhall give an account by and by, but as for the Edict it ſelf, if it could do any ſervice to our Authors deſign, it at laſt proves ſuppoſititious, as is fully proved by *Gothofred* in his excellent Edition of the *Theodoſian* Code, his reaſons are too many to be here recited, I will give but one for all, *viz.* That this Law is contrary to all the Laws of the Roman Empire; for though ſeveral Emperours do in their ſeveral Novels give the Biſhops Power to decide cauſes by way of Arbitration or the conſent of both parties,

which Power they enlarged or contracted as they pleaſed, and to this all the other precedents produced by our Author relate; yet that one party ſhould have liberty of appeal from the civil Court at any time before judgment given without the conſent of his Adverſary, is ſuch a wild and extravagant priviledg, as is inconſiſtent with all the rules of the Imperial Law. And yet that is the only deſign of that Edict. *Quicunque itaque litem habens, ſive poſſeſſor ſive petitor erit, inter initia litis, vel decurſis temporum curriculis, ſive cum negotium peroratur, ſive cum jam cœperit promi ſententia, judicium eligit ſacro-ſanctæ legis Antiſtitis, ilico, ſine aliqua dubitatione, etiamſi alia pars refragatur, ad Epiſcopum cum ſermone litigantium dirigatur*: Which I ſay is ſuch an abſurd liberty as would utterly deſtroy all the Power of the civil Magiſtrate, if the humour or perverſneſs of any man could ſo eaſily baulk their ſentence. But beſide the abſurdity of the Law it ſelf, there is no ſuch Edict extant in the *Juſtinian* Code, nor any mention of it in any ancient Writers of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. For as for that paſſage of *Sozomen*, *l.* 1. *c.* 9. in which ſome learned

learned men fancy they find ſome foot-ſteps of this Law, it is quite to the other purpoſe that I but now mentioned, *viz.* the Biſhops Power of determining cauſes by the mutual conſent of Parties. When this Edict was forged, and by whom it is uncertain, but it is probably conjectur'd by *Gothofred* from the Barbarity of its ſtile, and great likeneſs of it to that of *Conſtantines* Donation, to have been forged in the ſame Shop and by the ſame hand. But if this Edict were as true as the reſt are, which give Biſhops Power to ſentence cauſes *præeunte vinculo compromiſſi*, yet where do we find any Edict for enabling them to enforce their decrees by Excommunication? Not one ſyllable of that in all the *Roman* Laws, but on the contrary the Civil Magiſtrates and their Officers are commanded to put the Biſhops Sentence in execution. Is it not then a very forced way of Arguing, that becauſe the *Roman* Emperours granted the Chriſtian Biſhops ſome juriſdiction, they muſt of neceſſity have granted them the Power of Excommunication, though there is no ſuch Edict extant in all their Laws? They conferr'd many Priviledges upon

the Clergy in the Titles, *De Epiſcopis, Eccleſiis, Clericis & de Religione*, yet there is nothing in both the Codes, and all the Novels, to veſt them with any power of Excommunication, and therefore as thoſe other they enjoyed by the Emperours favour not by any antecedent Right; ſo ſeeing they exerciſed this Power, and that not by vertue of any Imperial grant, it is evident that they received their Authority from ſome other hand. So that to conclude, there cannot be a more pregnant Argument againſt our Author's opinion than the body of the Imperial Law, in which there is not one Inſtance recorded, that ever any Emperour pretended to this Power himſelf, or granted it to his Biſhops; for from thence it unavoidably follows, that if they had it at all, they had it from ſome other Commiſſion. And thus am I come to the concluſion of this Argument, for though there are many Precedents of latter Times, yet I am not concern'd to juſtifie what was done by *Huns*, *Goths*, and *Vandals*, whoſe practices were the meer effects of Ignorance and Barbarity; and oblige us rather to pity than to follow their Examples.

PART

PART II.

HAving hitherto treated with the falſe Pretenders to the Church of *England*, I come now in the laſt place to treat more amicably with ſome of its miſtaken Friends, and they are thoſe that own a Government in it, but without Governours; allowing indeed that there ought to be ſome ſort of Government eſtabliſh'd in the Church, but then they deny any particular Form of it to have been ſettled by Divine Right, or Apoſtolical Conſtitution, and leave it wholly to the choice and determination of Humane Authority. So that though the Church of *England* happen to be at preſent govern'd by Biſhops; and though upon that account we may owe duty and ſubjection to them as our lawful Superiours, yet they are not ſet over us by any Divine Commiſſion, but purely by his Majeſtie's good Will and Pleaſure, who at his Reſtitution to his Kingdoms, might have forborn to reſtore the then Aboliſh'd Order of Biſhops, and inſtead

of that have eſtabliſh'd ſome other Form of Government, that he judged moſt ſuitable to the preſent ſtate of things; which if he had done, that then had been the Church of *England*. Now the Birth of this Opinion ſeems to have happened on this manner. Mr. *Calvin* having founded his *Geneva* Platform upon Divine Inſtitution, as he particularly does in the Fourth Book of his Inſtitutions, *Chap.* 11. though ſome men, that are more his Diſciples than they are willing to own, are pleaſed to deny it. And in purſuance of this Decree, *Beza* and all the other firſt Apoſtles of his Church having ſpent all their pains in endeavouring to make it good out of the Word of God, the learned men that came after them, both in the *French* and *Dutch* Churches, becauſe they muſt needs go beyond thoſe that went before them, proceeded to advance the Argument from Scripture to Antiquity; and have with infinite induſtry ſifted all the Writings of the Ancients, to prove that there was no other Form of Government in the Church but by *Presbyters* in the firſt Ages of it, next and immediately

diately after the Apoſtles. The chief Labourers in which Cauſe among many other leſs learned, were *Blondel*, *Salmaſius*, and *Dallé*, who ſpent the greateſt part both of their Life and Learning, upon this Argument. But they proceeding for the moſt part in a ſceptical and deſtructive way, not ſo much relying upon the Teſtimony as impairing the credit of Antiquity, which it ſeems they ſuppoſed the beſt way to maintain their Argument, this ſoon gave occaſion to ſome Learned men converſant in their Writings, to conclude againſt all pretences to the Divine, or Apoſtolical Inſtitution of any unalterable and perpetual Form of Church-Government whatſoever, and ſo to think of allaying thoſe Controverſies about a *Jus Divinum*, that had been lately and ſtill were managed among us with ſo much heat and noiſe, by leaving it (as they ſay our Saviour and his Apoſtles did) to the prudence of every particular Church to agree upon its own Form, as it judgeth moſt conducing to the end of Government in that particular Church. This is the ſtate of the Queſtion as they determine it, and the Opinion is grown

popular and plauſible, in great Vogue both among the Learned and Unlearned, and is almoſt become the Rule and Standard of all our Eccleſiaſtical Polity. In ſo much, that there are many worthy Gentlemen (as any one may obſerve in his ordinary Converſation) that were ſtout and loyal Confeſſors to the Church of *England* under its Sufferings, that at this time look upon it as an Arbitrary and indifferent thing. And therefore in purſuance of my deſign in behalf of the Church of *England*, I am obliged to examine the reaſons and Principles upon which it is founded, and to ſhew that it is ſo far from tending to the Peace of an Eſtabliſh'd Church, that it is deſtructive to the Being and Settlement of all the Chriſtian Churches in the World. And though here I have many learned worthy men for my Adverſaries, yet I hope to manage the Diſpute with that Candour and Integrity, that none ſhall have any reaſon to complain of any more unkindneſs, than what is abſolutely neceſſary to my doing right to the Church of *England*. And this I am ſure can give no Offence to good men, how much ſoever

ſoever I may chance to croſs with their particular Sentiments and Opinions. And as for bad men (for there are of both ſorts engaged in the Opinion) I were not true to my own Integrity, if I ſuffered my ſelf to be in the leaſt ſwayed by their good or bad Opinion; for I write not to pleaſe but to convince them, which I know as long as they continue bad is but to provoke them. And with this honeſt reſolution, I now proceed to vindicate one of the moſt evident, but moſt injured Truths in the World. And in it I ſhall be much briefer than at firſt I intended, for when we have lopt off all that is not directly pertinent to the Enquiry, as we ſhall reduce the Debate to a narrow compaſs, ſo may we eaſily bring it to a ſpeedy iſſue. And therefore I ſhall purpoſely paſs over all thoſe things, that relate only to the occaſional exerciſe, and outward adminiſtration of Church-Authority. And particularly that wide argument of Diſpute, whether the diſtribution of Provinces and Dioceſſes were through the *Roman* Empire, framed by the diviſion of the Civil Government. For whether it were, or were not, that

that concerns not the queſtion of the Inſtitution of a Ruling Clergy, but only the manner or faſhion of adminiſtring their Power when reduced to Practice. For the extent of their Juriſdiction, is is but accidental to the ſupremacy of their Power, and whether the Circuit of a Monarchs Government be little or great, it is all one as to the nature of Monarchy. So that it is not at all material how the bounds of Dioceſſes came to be aſſign'd; how Churches extended themſelves from great Cities into the adjacent Territories, till they ſometimes ſwell'd into Provinces, and how Biſhops came to be ſubject to Metropolitans, and Metropolitans to Patriarchs; all which, and divers other particulars, though they are very copiouſly inſiſted upon by Learned men in the preſent Queſtion, are yet altogether uſeleſs as to its Determination, becauſe they only concern the outward and accidental Exerciſe, and have no reference to the eſſential Form of Church-Government. So that the only thing concern'd in our preſent enquiry is, as Mr. *Selden* has rightly ſtated it, *Utrùm ex ipſâ purâ putâ Origine, ſeu primâ ac merâ naſcentis Eccleſiæ*

Præfat. in Eutych.

cleſiæ Chriſtianæ Diſciplinâ, Epiſcopalis ſeu Ordo, ſive Dignitas, ſive Gradus, Presbyterali ſeu Sacerdotali, ſuperior vel alius, aut ei neutiquam diſpar ſeu idem fuerit habendus. That is in ſhort, whether the Church were at firſt founded in a ſuperiority and ſubordination of Eccleſiaſtical Officers to each other, or a parity and equality of all among themſelves; ſo that if we can prove the preeminence and ſuperiority of one Order above all others in the Government of the Church from the beginning of it, we ſhall thereby make good all that is eſſential to that Power and Authority, that we challenge as proper only to the Epiſcopal Order and Office. And this we doubt not but to perform with clear and demonſtrative evidence from theſe three Topicks.

I. Of our Saviour's own expreſs Inſtitution.

II. The practice of the Apoſtles in Conformity to it.

III. The practice of the Primitive Church in the Ages next and immediatly after the Apoſtles.

And

And *First*, As to our Saviour's Inſtitution it is manifeſt, That he founded his Church in an imparity of Eccleſiaſtical Officers, in that he did by his own immediate Appointment, authorize and ſet apart two diſtinct Orders of men for Eccleſiaſtical Miniſtries, the *Twelve* Apoſtles, and the *Seventy* Diſciples, whoſe Office, if it were the ſame, to what purpoſe were they diſtinguiſh'd? And why when a place was vacant in the Apoſtolate, muſt one be ſubſtituted by Divine Deſignation to complete the Number? Why ſhould not one of the *Seventy* without any further Election, have ſerved the turn, ſeeing he was qualified with an Identity of Office and Order? Nay to what purpoſe ſhould they be reckoned apart under different Names and in different Ranks, if there were no difference intended in their employments and commiſſions? And why were they not all comprehended in one number, and ranged in one Catalogue? If the *Twelve* were nothing more than the *Seventy*, and the *Seventy* nothing leſs than the *Twelve*, to what purpoſe do we hear ſo oft of the Twelve and the Seventy, or of the Seventy two

(for of that the learned diſpute) and not rather of the Eighty two, or Eighty four? For do we think that our Saviour would diſtinguiſh the Officers of his Kingdom by meer Words and empty Titles? And yet the Apoſtleſhip could be nothing more, if it carried in it no ſuperiority of Office above the Seventy. Some inequality we muſt diſcover, and that intended too by our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, elſe ſhall we never be able to give our ſelves any imaginable Account of their Inſtitution. And now, what clearer evidence can any man demand for a Divine Right of Superiority and Subordination of Church Officers, than our Saviour's own expreſs and particular Inſtitution?

Yes (ſay they) but the Inequality between the Twelve Apoſtles and the Seventy Diſciples conſiſted in a ſuperiority of Order and Office, not of Power and Juriſdiction. Very good! This grants all that we can deſire or demand, to prove the Supreme Authority of the Supreme Order, becauſe every Superiour Eccleſiaſtical Order as ſuch is Authoritative, and therefore an eminency of Order muſt not only infer, but include a

ſupe-

ſuperiority of Power, ſeeing the Order it ſelf as ſuch (if it be any thing) is the proper and immediate ſeat of Authority, and all the Juriſdiction of the Biſhop, whatſoever it is, is claim'd and exerciſed by vertue of his Order. So that if the Apoſtles were the higheſt Order of Eccleſiaſticks, they were for that Reaſon alone, though there were no other, the higheſt Judicature. And in the ſame degrees of proportion that they were advanced above others in dignity of Title, they were ſo in ſupremacy of Power, becauſe their Dignity as ſuch, is nothing elſe but ſo much Power in the Church of God; deveſt them of that, and they immediately return to the condition of Ordinary and Unconſecrated men: And the Apoſtles themſelves were no more than all other common Believers, but by vertue of their Commiſſion to rule and govern the Church; reverſe that, and they are degraded from their Order, as well as ſtript of their Juriſdiction. So lamentably do theſe learned men entangle themſelves by diſtinguiſhing ſo vainly in this caſe between a ſuperiority of Order and Power, when the one is not only the

the very Ground and Foundation, but (to ſpeak in the language of the Schoolmen, from whom theſe Metaphyſical nothings are taken) the very Formality of the other, and the Apoſtolical Power is Formally, and as ſuch, the very ſame with the Apoſtolical Office. So little real difference is there in this diſtinction, that it is not poſſible to frame one in Notion and Conception, but whoever pretends to conceive one, muſt of neceſſity conceive both, or conceive nothing. And therefore I would very fain know wherein conſiſts this ſuperiority of Order and Dignity, without any ſuperiority of Power: For what do men mean by Power, but a right to Govern? and what by Order but a ſuperiority of ſome as Rulers and a ſubordination of others as Ruled? What then is the difference between an inequality of Order and Power, when they both equally ſignifie Superiority and Subjection? And therefore theſe Perſons that relie ſo much on this diſtinction, would have done very well to have conſidered with themſelves, wherein conſiſts the Eſſence of Order when ſeparated from Power, which if

they

they had done, they would ſoon have diſcerned, that they had only deceived themſelves with an idle and an empty Word. However it were worth their while, to define what it was that was peculiar to the Apoſtolical Order, beſide the Supreme Government of the Church, eſpecially when (as it is acknowledged by all Parties) the Apoſtles enjoyed during their own lives, the ſupreme Power in the Government of the Church, and that the Parity of *Presbyters* aroſe not till after their Deaths, they having appointed no Succeſſors in their Apoſtolical Supremacy. From whence, what can be more apparent than that their Office could not poſſibly conſiſt in any thing leſs than a ſuperiority of Power over all the other Paſtors of the Church. And now when our Saviour himſelf has thus expreſly Eſtabliſh'd the Government of his Church in an imparity of Order and Power, what farther Preſcript would men have for the continuance of his own Eſtabliſhment? That alone is ſufficient to preſcribe to all Ages and Nations, and if any man ſhall dare to remonſtrate to its Obligation, he muſt have confidence enough

to

to preſume that he is indued with more Wiſdom, or entruſted with more Authority than our Saviour himſelf. For otherwiſe he cannot but think that he is obliged in Conſcience and Modeſty too, rather to eſteem this Model than any one of his own, or any others Contrivance. Yes, but though it be proved that the Apoſtles had ſuperiority of Order and Juriſdiction over the other Paſtors of the Church by an Act of Chriſt, yet it muſt further be proved that it was Chriſt's intention, that Superiority ſhould continue in their Succeſſors; or it makes nothing to the purpoſe. *For a bare Divine Command,* ſay they, *is not ſufficient to make a Law immutable, unleſs there be likewiſe expreſſed, that it is the Will of God that it ſhould always continue.* No, no, you are too nice and ſhie of your Obedience in this particular Caſe, and may upon the ſame ground ſet your ſelves looſe from all the Laws of the Goſpel that are not enjoyn'd with an expreſs declaration of their being Immutable, and thereby you have quit your ſelves of the greateſt part of your Chriſtian Duty. For we ſhall find but very few Precepts, either of our Savi-

our or his Apoſtles tied with this double Knot, and it ſeems without that, they are not ſtrong enough to tie any man to Obedience. Neither do I ſee how upon this Principle, we can avoid that frivolous Objection of the *Socinians* againſt the perpetual neceſſity of the Sacrament of Baptiſm, *viz.* That ſeeing it was Inſtituted by our Saviour only to paſs men from *Judaiſm* and *Gentiliſm* to Chriſtianity, it is therefore now of no neceſſity among Chriſtians, unleſs our Saviour had declared, that it was his Will and Intention that it ſhould always continue in his Church. Eſpecially when this Ceremony was taken up from the practice of the Synagogue, where when any man had once renounced Heatheniſm, and entred himſelf into the Jewiſh Church, it was never after repeated in any of his Poſterity, but they were all by vertue of their Fore-fathers Baptiſm, eſteem'd as born in a ſtate of Holineſs and Regeneracy. But however this general Principle is ſo far from Truth and Sobriety, that it is a plain thruſting our own Preſumptions upon the Will of God, which being once declared, it binds us for ever, till himſelf

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is pleaſed to reverſe it, his meer Inſtitution is its own perpetual Obligation, and whatever he commands, no Power can take it off, but that which bound it on. And therefore it is a vain ſcrupuloſity (if I may call ſo ſceptical a pretence by that name) to require of him not only to faſten his Laws by enacting them, but as it were to clinch them too by declaring their perpetuity. In all other Caſes but this, it is ſuppoſed that whatever he commands, he commands for ever till he declares the contrary; for though his Poſitive Laws be revocable in themſelves, yet being revocable only by God himſelf and his own Power, ſince he hath already in his Word fully revealed his Will, unleſs therein he hath declared when their Obligation ſhall ceaſe, they continue Irreverſible. It therefore being once granted that the Apoſtles had a ſuperiority of Juriſdiction by an Act of Chriſt, it plainly follows that without any farther declaration of its perpetuity, their Power is irreverſible. Eſpecially when the Rule whereby we are left to judg of the mind and intention of the Lawgiver is the Reaſon of the Law, *viz.*

That the Reaſon continuing the Law ſhould remain in force; though I cannot ſee of what uſe this ſhould be to thoſe who will give leave to demand no other reaſons of any Divine Poſitive Laws beſide the Will of the Law-giver: For if that be the only reaſon of the Law, then it is in vain to pretend to judg of it by any other. But yet however I ſhall cloſe with them upon their own Principle, and to ſave farther trouble, I would only put them to aſſign what particular Ground and Reaſon there was of eſtabliſhing a Superiority and Subordination of Church-Officers then; that is ceaſed for all ſucceeding Ages of the Church; and till they can give themſelves and us ſome competent ſatisfaction in this, deſire them to acquieſce in our Saviour's Inſtitution. But alas, this was never ſo much as attempted, and is manifeſtly impoſſible to be perform'd; for that man no doubt would make wiſe work of it, that ſhould undertake to give the World a ſatisfactory Account of the particular Grounds and Reaſons that ſhould make an inequality of Power in Eccleſiaſtical Officers neceſſary in our Saviour's Days, and

and needleſs ever ſince. But if this cannot be done (as it is certain at firſt view, that it never can) then certainly the meer Inſtitution of our Saviour in a matter of ſo great moment to the Church, is ſufficient of it ſelf to paſs a perpetual and indiſpenſible Obligation upon all Ages of it. And now upon theſe Grounds that I have already obtain'd from our Saviour's expreſs Inſtitution, I need not diſpute with our Adverſaries (for that is one of their little ſhifts) whether the Miſſions of the Apoſtles and the Seventy, were only Temporary. For whether they were, or were not, it is from thence evident what Model of Government our Saviour framed for his Church; and that is all that is needful to my purpoſe. And therefore I will freely grant that our Saviour's deſign in Life-time, ſeems to have been not ſo much to found Churches himſelf, as to have prepared and inſtructed his Diſciples, how to do it after his departure. So that he rather made a Specimen of the Conſtitution of his Church, than erected any ſtanding Fabrick of it. For the Foundations of it were to be laid in the evidence of his Reſurrection

from the dead. And therefore we do not find that the Apoſtles acted with a plenitude of Power, till he had given them a new Commiſſion after his Reſurrection, and it is remarkable that in St. *Matthew* 16. 19. he veſts them with the power of Binding and Looſing in the Future Tenſe. But in St. *John* 20. 23. after his Reſurrection it is expreſſed in the Preſent Tenſe. Then it was that he gave them that Authority which himſelf had exerciſed whilſt he remain'd on Earth. But then, when immediately in purſuance of their new Commiſſion, the Apoſtles thought themſelves obliged to chooſe one into their Order, to ſupply the Vacancy made by the death of *Judas*; What can be more evident than that they thought the Apoſtolical Office by our Saviour's Appointment, diſtinct from and ſuperiour to all other Offices in the Church? So that it is manifeſt that the Form obſerved by the Apoſtles in the Planting and Governing of Churches, was Model'd according to our Saviour's own Platform; and after that it is not at all material to enquire whether he only drew the Model, or erected the Building.

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But whichſoever he did, it is improved into an impregnable Demonſtration from the undoubted Practice of the Apoſtles, and from them the perpetual Tradition of the Catholick Church, in that it is plain that they thought themſelves obliged to ſtand to this Original Form of Church-Government. For the Apoſtles (we all know, and all Parties grant) during their days, kept up the diſtinction and preeminence of their Order, and from them the Biſhops of the Firſt Ages of the Church claim'd their Succeſſion, and every where challenged their Epiſcopal Authority from the Inſtitution of Chriſt, and the Example of his Apoſtles.

And now are we enter'd upon the ſecond main Controverſie, *viz.* The Authority of the Apoſtolical Practice, againſt which, three things are uſually alledged: *That neither can we have that certainty of Apoſtolical Practice which is neceſſary to conſtitute a Divine Right, nor ſecondly is it probable that the Apoſtles did tie themſelves to any one fixed Courſe in Modelling Churches; nor thirdly, if they did, doth it neceſſarily follow that we muſt obſerve the ſame.* And the *firſt* of

these is made out from the equivalency of the names Bishop and Presbyter; *secondly* from the Ambiguity of some places of Scripture, pleaded in behalf of different Forms of Government; *thirdly* from the Defectiveness, Ambiguity, Partiality, and Repugnancy of the Records of the succeeding Ages, which should inform us what was the Apostolical Practice. But as to the first, I shall wholly wave the dispute of the signification of the words, because it is altogether beside the purpose; and if it were not, our other Proofs are so pregnant, as to render it altogether useless. Neither indeed would this ever have been any matter of Dispute, had not our Adversaries for want of better Arguments, been forced to make use of such slender pretences. But how impotently *Salmasius*, and *Blondel*, who were the main Founders of the Argument, have argued from the Community of the Names, the Identity of the Office, any one that has the patience to read them over, may satisfie himself. As for my own part I cannot but admire to see Learned men persist so stubbornly in a palpable Impertinency, when from the Equi-

Equivalency of the words *Biſhop* and *Presbyter* in the Apoſtles time, they will infer no imparity of Eccleſiaſtical Officers, notwithſtanding it is ſo evident and granted by themſelves, that the Apoſtles enjoyed a ſuperiority of Power over the other Paſtors of the Church, which being once proved or granted (and themſelves never doubted of it) to infer their beloved ἰσοτιμία or Parity of the Clergy from the Equivocal ſignification of thoſe two words, is only to out-face their own Convictions and their Adverſaries Demonſtrations. For if it be proved, and themſelves cannot deny it, that there was an inequality of Offices, from the Superiority of the Apoſtles, it is a very Childiſh attempt to go about to prove that there was not; becauſe there were two Synonymous Terms whereby to expreſs the whole Order of the Clergy. But to perſiſt in this trifling Inference, as *Salmaſius* has (who when he was informed of its manifeſt weakneſs and abſurdity, would never renounce it, but ſtill repeated it in one Book after another, without any improvement but of Paſſion and Confidence) is one of the moſt

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woful Examples, that I remember, of a learned man's Trifling, that has not the ingenuity to yield, when he finds himself vanquish'd not only by his Adversary but his Argument.

Neither shall I trouble my self with other mens disputes about particular Texts of Scripture, when it is manifest from the whole Current of Scripture, that the Apostles exercised a superiority of Power over the other Pastors of the Church, and that is all that is requisite to the Argument from Apostolical Practice; for as yet it is nothing to us whether they were Presbyters or Bishops, that they set over particular Churches; that shall be enquired into when we come to the Practice of the Primitive Church, it is enough that they were subject to the Apostles, for then by Apostolical Practice there was a Superiority and Subordination in Church-Government. And therefore I cannot but wonder here too at the blindness of *Walo Messalinus*, who in pursuance of his Verbal Argument, produces this passage out of *Theodoret*, and spends a great deal of the first part of his Book in declaiming upon it. Ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἄφην, τὺς

τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐκάλουν ποτὲ Πρεσβυτέρους καὶ Ἐπισκόπους, τοὺς δὲ νῦν καλουμένους Ἐπισκόπους Ἀποστόλους ὠνόμαζον. Τοῦ δὲ χρόνου προϊόντος τὸ μὲν τῆς Ἀποστολῆς ὄνομα τοῖς ἀληθῶς Ἀποστόλοις κατέλιπον, τὴν δὲ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς προσηγορίαν τοῖς πάλαι καλουμένοις Ἀποστόλοις ἐπέθεσε. *Then the ſame men were call'd Presbyters and Biſhops, and thoſe that we now call Biſhops, they then call'd Apoſtles, but in proceſs of time the name of Apoſtolate was appropriate to them who were truly and properly Apoſtles, and the name of Biſhop was applied to them who were formerly call'd Apoſtles.* Than which words (beſide that they contain the true ſtate of the Queſtion) there is ſcarce a clearer paſſage in all Antiquity to confound his cauſe. For what can be a plainer Reproof to their noiſe about the Equivalency of words than to be told that it is true, that the words Biſhop and Presbyter, ſignified the ſame thing in the Apoſtles time, but that thoſe that we now call Biſhops, were then call'd Apoſtles, who exerciſed the Epiſcopal Power over the other Clergy, but that afterward in proceſs of time they left the word Apoſtolate to thoſe who were ſtrictly and properly ſo call'd,

call'd, and ſtil'd all other Biſhops; who in former times were ſtiled Apoſtles. What I ſay can be more peremptory againſt his Opinion, that concludes from the equivalency of Names, to the parity of Power, than this, that notwithſtanding the words were equivalent, yet the Epiſcopal Power was then in the Apoſtles, whoſe ſucceſſors in their ſupremacy came in after-times to be call'd Biſhops? And if ſo, then is it evident that there was the ſame imparity of Church-Officers in the Apoſtles time, as in ſucceeding Ages. Nay, our friend *Walo* is not content to make this out for us only, as to the Apoſtles themſelves but as to their immediate Succeſſors, whom they employed in the ſettlement of Churches, and to whom they committed the Apoſtolical Power for their Government, and theſe too he proves were ſtil'd Apoſtles, ſuch as *Titus*, *Timothy*, *Epaphroditus*, *Clemens*, *Linus*, *Marcus*, ſo that not only the Apoſtles, but the Evangeliſts (as they call'd them) were diſtinguiſh'd from the other Clergy, and endued with a ſuperiority of Power over their reſpective Churches, and hereby we gain the authority of

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Apoſtolical Practice, not only for themſelves, but for their Companions and Succeſſors, which does not only extend our Argument, but joyns together the practice of the Primitive Times, of which we have certain Records with that of the Apoſtles, and ſo prevents all their fond Dreams of an unknown Interval immediately after the death of the Apoſtles; for if theſe Apoſtolical men ſupplied their Places, it will be very eaſie to find out who ſupplied theirs.

Neither, *thirdly*, need I trouble my ſelf with any long diſpute concerning the Obligation of Apoſtolical Practice, for whether or no meer Apoſtolical Practice be obligatory by vertue of their Example, is very little material to our Enquiry; for ſome things are too trifling, or too tranſient in their own Natures to deſerve to paſs into preſcription; but it is enough in this caſe, that what the Apoſtles did, was in purſuance of our Saviour's Inſtitution, and that in a matter of perpetual concernment to the Church; and they who require to the Obligation of ſuch an Apoſtolical Practice, an expreſs Law to declare their intention

tention that it ſhould bind for ever, are guilty of the ſame phantaſtick niceneſs as they that require the ſame for the perpetuity of every Divine Law, and therefore have been conſider'd already. And for that reaſon I ſhall add nothing more to what I have already ſaid as to this particular, than to grant that whatever the Apoſtles either commanded, or practiſed upon ſome particular temporary and occaſional Caſes, was not ſufficient to found any univerſal and unchangeable Obligation, becauſe the reaſon of the Precept was apparently tranſient, and the goodneſs of the action caſual. But otherwiſe if there were any Preſcript, or Practice of theirs (though it were not founded upon any Divine Inſtitution) that did not relate to peculiar Occaſions and Circumſtances, but are or may be of equal uſefulneſs to all Places, Times, and Perſons, that is a certain and undoubted evidence of their conſtant and unabliſhable Obligation. And therefore here I ſhall only put them to their former task to aſſign what particular ground and reaſon there was of eſtabliſhing a Superiority and Subordination of Church-Officers in the

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times of the Apoſtles that is ceaſed in all ſucceeding Ages of the Church, and till they can diſcharge this Task, adviſe them not to depart raſhly from ſo ſacred and venerable a Preſcription.

But that which improves the Argument both from our Saviour's Inſtitution and the Apoſtles Practice, into a complete Demonſtration, is the practice of the Primitive Churches, in the Ages next and immediately ſucceeding the Apoſtles; For if the Government of the Church were by our Saviour founded upon Divine Inſtitution in an inequality of Church-Officers, and if the firſt Governours of it thought themſelves obliged to keep cloſe to its Original Platform; and if their immediate Succeſſors conceived themſelves as much obliged to obſerve the ſame as impoſed upon them by the Command of Chriſt, and deliver'd to them by the Example and Tradition of his Apoſtles, that certainly may ſerve for a very competent proof of its neceſſity and perpetuity. Now then as for the power and preheminence of the Epiſcopal Order, it is atteſted by the beſt Monuments and Records of the firſt and moſt remote

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Antiquity; and we find ſuch early inſtances and evidences of it, that unleſs it deſcended from the Apoſtles times, we can never give any account in the World whence it derived its Original. And this brings us upon the main ſanctuary of our Adverſaries, *viz.* The defectiveneſs of Antiquity in reference to the ſhewing what certain Form the Apoſtles obſerved in ſettling the Government of Churches; and here they run into a large common place, of the deep ſilence of antiquity and the defectiveneſs of the Records of the Church in the interval next and immediately ſucceeding the Apoſtles. But here in the firſt place I muſt deſire them to conſider, that if this Objection be of any force againſt the certainty of Apoſtolical Tradition in this particular, it will utterly overthrow all the teſtimony of the Ancients as to all other matters of Faith, and particularly as to the certain Canon and Divine Authority of the Scriptures, for if they are not (as is pretended) competent Witneſſes of the practice of the Apoſtles, becauſe of their diſtance from the time of the Apoſtles, neither for the ſame reaſon are their

their reports to be relied upon with any confidence, as to the certainty of any of their Writings. It is not to be expected that I ſhould here reprent how falſe this exception is *de facto*, and how unreaſonable *de jure*, either againſt the Conſtitutions, or the Authentick Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, it is enough that they ſtand and fall together, ſo that whoever oppoſes the Divine and Apoſtolical Form of Church Government as delivered to us by the Primitive Church, does upon his own principles defeat and reject all the proofs of the Divine Authority of the holy Scriptures, in that thoſe ſceptical grounds and pretences he is forced to urge againſt one, fall as dangerouſly on both. And this may ſerve to prevent and invalidate the force of their Argument without anſwering it; when if they ſhould deal as rigorouſly in any other caſe as they are pleaſed to do in this, the moſt certain and undoubted Records cannot eſcape the ſeverity of their cenſure. Though our comfort is that neither of them are liable to ſuch wild and wanton Objections, in that (as I ſhall ſhew) the Tradition of the Church was always conſtant and uninterrupted,

terrupted, and that there was no ſuch Chaſm, as is pretended, between the times of the Apoſtles and the next Chriſtian Writers. For (to ſay nothing here of the Canon of the Scriptures) though the men of that Age left us no formal Hiſtories and Catalogues of the ſucceſſion of Biſhops in all their ſeveral Sees, wherewith ſome men unreaſonable enough upbraid us, when it is ſo manifeſt that it was at that time too young for that care, in that as yet there was ſcarce any ſucceſſion. Yet were they no leſs than Apoſtolical men that vouched the Apoſtolical Order and Juriſdiction of Biſhops, and this one would think enough to ſatisfie any modeſt or ingenious man of their Inſtitution from the beginning. When it is aſſerted, or rather ſuppoſed by the very firſt Writers of the Church that were capable of atteſting it. So that whoever can withſtand their Evidence, is proof againſt all Evidence of matter of Fact, and may, if he pleaſe, laugh at all the Tales and Legends that are told concerning the ſucceſſion of the *Roman* Empire from *Auguſtus* to *Conſtantine*. But to wave all other parallel Caſes, that

that which I have already propounded is irrefragable, *viz.* That thoſe men that beat about in the Writings of the Ancients to ſtart ſceptical pretences againſt the uſe and inſtitution of Epiſcopacy, would do very well to conſider the conſequences of this rude and licentious way of Arguing. And (as the Reverend and Learned Doctor *Hammond* long ſince remarked it) they that ſo confidently reject the Epiſtles of *Ignatius*, ſhrewdly indanger (if they will ſtand to their own principles) the credit and authority of the ſacred Canon; when theſe are vouch'd for the true and authentick Epiſtles of *Ignatius*, by as ſtrong a current and unanimous conſent of the Fathers, as moſt of the Canonical Books of Scripture. And therefore it is obſervable, that the proud *Walo Meſſalinus* does with the ſame eaſe and confidence, piſh away one of the Epiſtles of St. *Peter*, as he does all theſe of this Apoſtolical Martyr; and might in the ſame pert and pedantick humour, and with the ſame evidence of Reaſon huff all the reſt after it into the Apocryphal Rubbiſh. But becauſe our Adverſaries main ſtrength lies in this Ob- Diff. 1. cap. 1.

jection, and ſome ill-minded men will be haſty to ſeiſe on it for worſe purpoſes than they intended, I ſhall conſider it in its full force and glory, The defect then pretended is three-fold, as to Places, as to Times, as to Perſons.

1. As to Places, and here they tell us we can have no certainty without an univerſal Teſtimony. For if but one place varied, that is enough to overthrow the neceſſity of any one form of Government, and therefore ſeeing we have not an account of what was done by the Apoſtles in all Churches, we can have no ſufficient certainty of their practice. But certainly never was any thing ſo hardly dealt with as Antiquity by theſe men; for unleſs we could be certain that every thing that was done in the Church 1500 Years agoe was recorded, and made known to us by ſome unqueſtionable way, all that is recorded, be it never ſo certain and evident, can be of no uſe for our Information. If this hard condition be put upon us, I muſt confeſs that we not only have no certainty of the Primitive Practice, but that it is impoſſible that we ſhould have any either in that or

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any other Record. But this certainly is too rigorous proceeding with the authority of Precedents, that let us produce never ſo many, they ſhall ſignifie nothing as to their uſe, unleſs we can demonſtrate that there never was, or indeed could be one contrary Example in the World. But I am very apt to believe that all ingenuous men will be fully ſatisfied with this, that all the precedents that are recorded are for us, and therefore till our Adverſaries are able to produce ſome againſt us, to reſt in the certainty of thoſe Records that are preſerved, without a vain enquiry after what might or might not be in thoſe that are loſt. And therefore our Adverſaries inſtead of making ſuch wild and ſceptical demands, if they would prevail upon the minds of men, ſhould in the firſt place have proved the variety of Apoſtolical Practice, and that indeed would have diſproved the neceſſity of any one Form; but that is a thing they never attempt. When therefore we have this uniformity of practice in all Churches, whoſe ſettlement is known, it betrays an unreaſonable partiality in men to put us upon giving an account

of what St. *Andrew* did in *Scythia*, and St. *Thomas* in *India*, for certainly all impartial men will be ſatisfied with the uniform practice of all the known Churches of *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Affrica*. And that is enough in anſwer to the firſt pretended defect of Antiquity as to Places.

The ſecond defect is as to Times. And here they fall directly upon the credit of all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and in particular upon *Euſebius* the Father of it; who, they ſay, lived at too great a diſtance from Apoſtolical Times, and wanted ſufficient Records for his Information. But this I muſt anſwer that I know not any Hiſtorian furniſhed with better and more certain accounts of the things they write of, than *Euſebius*. The Tradition of the Church being conveyed down to him in the moſt uninterrupted and undoubted manner poſſible. St. *Polycarp*, St. *Ignatius*, St. *Clemens* of *Rome*, were familiarly acquainted with the Apoſtles themſelves; *Irenæus*, *Tatianus*, *Theophilus Antiocheus*, *Athenagoras*, *Juſtin Martyr*, and many more converſt with them, as they did with the Apoſtles; to theſe ſucceed *Origen*, *Clemens*, *Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*,

lian, *Minutius Fælix*, *Lactantius*, *Arnobius*, *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*, *Gregorius Thaumaturgus*, St. *Cyprian*, beſide many other excellent Writers, whoſe Works he enjoyed, though ſome of them are ſince periſh'd, who all lived in the firſt and ſecond Centuries after the Apoſtles. Now out of theſe *Euſebius* collected his Hiſtory, and to their genuine and undoubted Writings ever refers himſelf to juſtifie his own Fidelity, quotes no Author for any matter of fact but what was done in his own Age, as particularly in the beginning of the *ſecond* Book the Reader is deſired to obſerve, that he collected the materials of it from the Writings of *Clemens*, *Tertullian*, *Joſephus*, and *Philo*, and the ſame Preface he might have ſet before every particular Book. And as he always refers to good Authors, ſo he rejects many things as counterfeit and ſpurious for this reaſon only, becauſe he finds no account of them in the Ancient Writers. But beſide the Writings of the Doctors of the Church, and the Epiſtles of Biſhops, the Originals whereof were then reſerved in the Archives of their ſeveral Churches, he made

very great uſe of the Acts of the Martyrs, that were then preſerved with great care and ſacredneſs, though afterwards it being the moſt valued part of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, it was the moſt improved into fabulous Legends and Stories. And beſide all this he was furniſhed with many excellent materials of the Firſt Times (which alone he could be ſuppoſed to want) by *Hegeſippus*, who wrote five Books of Commentaries, of the Acts of the Church about the Reign of *Marcus Aurelius*, which was ſcarce eighty Years after the death of St. *John*. So that it is no better than a very raſh cenſure of ſuch an Ancient and Apoſtolical Writer, to ſay that his Relations are as queſtionable as thoſe of *Euſebius* himſelf in reference to thoſe elder Times, when he lived almoſt in the very eldeſt times, and ſo near to the Apoſtles, that it was ſcarce poſſible that any matter of Fact, that happened in that Interval, could eſcape his knowledg. Now laſt of all, the Heathen Records themſelves were not a little uſeful to him, as himſelf informs us. Ἐις τοσοῦτον ἢ ἄρα κτ̄ τοὺς δηλουμένους ἡ τῆς ἡμετέρας πίστεως διδασκαλία διέλαμπεν,

Lib. 3. cap. 18.

λαμπεν, ὡς ἐ τὸς ἄποθεν τῶ καθ' ἡμᾶς λόγω συγγραφεῖς, μὴ ἀποκνῆσαι ταῖς αὐτῶν ἱστορίαις τότε διωγμὸν ἐ τὰ ἐν αὐτῶ μαρτύρια παραδοῦναι, &c. In theſe times (that is, about the Reign of *Domitian*) the Doctrine of the Chriſtian Faith was ſo flouriſhing, that the Heathen Writers have left exact Records of the Perſecutions and Martyrdoms. As for *Euſebius* his ſaying (which is ſo triumphantly inſiſted on to blaſt the whole credit of Antiquity) that it is difficult to find out who were the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles in the Churches planted by them, unleſs it be thoſe mentioned in the Writings of St. *Paul*, it is evident from his own words, that the difficulty ariſes not from the deficiency but from the too great plenty of Succeſſors. Τότε γὰρ οὖν μυρίοι σωτῆρες, ἐ ὡς αὐτὸς ὠνόμασε συστρατιῶται γενόμενοι, *For he had a thouſand Helpers, or as he was wont to call them Fellow-Souldiers.* So that the reaſon why it is ſo difficult to aſſign whom he appointed to preſide over the Churches that he converted, is becauſe he had ſuch an innumerable company of followers, that whom he ſet over what Churches, it is not poſſi- L. 3. c. 4.

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ble to define, than as himſelf has happened to name particular Perſons, as *Timothy*, *Titus*, *Creſcens*, *Clemens*, *Epaphroditus*, &c. which alone are a ſufficient evidence of the Apoſtles care to ſettle Succeſſors in the greater Churches. However this paſſage can by no means be made uſe of to blaſt the credit of Antiquity as to the matter in debate, becauſe it concerns not the uncertainty of the form of Government, but only of the Perſons who ſucceeded in the Apoſtolical Form in ſome particular Churches. And that alone is anſwer enough to the third defect as to Perſons, *viz.* That granting the Catalogues of the firſt Biſhops to be defective, that is no proof againſt the certainty of Epiſcopal Government, unleſs at the ſame time that we cannot find the Biſhop, we could find ſome other form of Government. Nay further, thoſe particulars that we have, are a ſufficient Teſtimony to the general Truth that we aſſert, in that it is atteſted by all the Records that are remaining, and that is enough to ſatisfie any reaſonable or impartial man, eſpecially when in the greater and more known Churches we have as certain an

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account of the Succeſſion, as we have of the Biſhops of *England* from the Reign of *Henry* the VIII, to *Charles* the II. But that concerns the Argument of Perſonal Succeſſion, which though I have prevented, I may conſider in its proper place: At preſent in order to the confuting of this Objection from the defect of Time, I ſhall ſhew that we have as certain and uninterrupted a Tradition of the matter in hand, as the moſt curious and diffident enquirer can demand for his full ſatisfaction.

And firſt, What can be more ancient, or is more evident, than the Teſtimony of *Clement* of *Rome*, in his famous Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, where exhorting them above all things to Peace and Unity, which indeed was the main Argument in the firſt Writers of the Church, one chief way that he propounds in order to it, is that every man keep his Order and Station, where beſide the Laity, he reckons up three diſtinct Orders of the Chriſtian Clergy, which he expreſſes by an alluſion, as was the cuſtom of the Apoſtolical Writers, to the Jewiſh Hierarchy, *viz.* The Office of High Prieſt, Prieſt and Levite,

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The paſſage is very full and pregnant. Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖ ἰδίαι λειτουργίαι δεδόμηται εἰσὶ καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται, καὶ λευίταις ἰδίαι διακονίαι ἐπίκειται· ὁ λαϊκὸς ἀνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δέδεται. Ἕκαστος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ, ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι εὐαρεστείτω Θεῷ, ἐν ἀγαθῇ συνειδήσει ὑπάρχων, μὴ παρεκβαίνων τὸν ὡρισμένον τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτῷ κανόνα ἐν σεμνότητι. The High Prieſt has his peculiar Office aſſign'd him, and the Prieſt has his Station bounded, and the Levites have their proper Miniſtries determined, and the Lay-man is obliged to his Lay-Offices. My Brethren, let every one in his Place and Order, worſhip God with a good Conſcience, not tranſgreſſing the ſettled Canon of his Duty according to the rule of Decency. Where it is manifeſt that he deſcribes the ſeveral Miniſtries of the Chriſtian Church at that time, by alluding to the Offices of the Moſaick Inſtitution. For why elſe ſhould he conclude with this Exhortation; [*And therefore, my Brethren, let every one of you keep his own Order,*] unleſs this diſtinction of Officers concern'd the *Corinthian* Chriſtians. So that though it be expreſſed by alluding

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to the Ordinances of the old Jewiſh Inſtitution, yet it is a deſcription of the preſent ſtate of the Chriſtian Church among thoſe to whom he writes, otherwiſe it were very impertinent to exhort them to keep thoſe Stations, if there were no ſuch among them. But the great Witneſs in this cauſe is that brave Martyr St. *Ignatius*, Pupil to St. *John*, and by him ordain'd Biſhop of *Antioch*, and chief Biſhop of *Aſia*, who whilſt he was in his way to his Martyrdom (being ſent from *Antioch* to *Rome*, to be devoured by wild Beaſts) in his journey wrote ſeveral Epiſtles to ſeveral Churches, in which he gives ſuch a plain Account of the Conſtitution of the Hierarchy in his time by the Orders of *Biſhop*, *Presbyter*, and *Deacon*, as plainly demonſtrates it to have been of Apoſtolical Antiquity. And this is ſo evident that there is no way of avoiding the Teſtimony but by flatly denying it: And therefore our Adverſaries will upon no terms allow theſe Epiſtles to be genuine, and take infinite pains to prove them, if it be poſſible, ſuppoſititious; ſo that this is become the great point in this Controverſie, and has been eagerly diſpu-

diſputed by many Learned men on both ſides. The two laſt that engaged in it are a learned Prelate of our own, and the famous Monſier *Daillé*, in whoſe Books the whole cauſe is not only contain'd, but I am apt to think, decided. For though *Daillé* was a Perſon of more Judgment, Temper, and Learning, than moſt of his Brethren, yet they were ſtrangely overborn by the ſtrength of Prejudice; and it is plain to any man that ever look'd into him, that he was firſt reſolved upon his Opinion, and then right or wrong to make it good, and becauſe he was well aware that theſe Epiſtles alone, were ſo clear and full a Teſtimony to the Apoſtolical Antiquity of the Epiſcopal Order, that they plainly prevented all Attempts and Arguments againſt it, he therefore ſet himſelf with all vehemence, and made it the buſineſs of his Life to deſtroy their Credit, and with infinite pains ſifted all the Rubbiſh of Antiquity, to find out every ſhred and atom of a Criticiſm, that might any way be made uſe of to impair their Reputation. Yet after all this Drudgery, are his Exceptions ſo plainly diſingenuous and unreaſonable,

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that they would fall as well upon any other ancient Record whatſoever, not only that ever has been, but that ever could have been, though upon no other ſcore than purely that of its Antiquity. But this Cauſe hath breath'd its laſt in this man, and this advantage we have gain'd by his zeal to maintain, and his ability to manage it, that it has put an utter end to this Controverſie, in that all his forces have been rebuked and overthrown with ſuch an irreſiſtible ſtrength of Reaſon and Learning, that for the time to come we may reſt ſecure that never any man of common Senſe, or ordinary Learning, or any Modeſty will dare to appear in ſuch an helpleſs and baffled Cauſe. For the particulars I refer to the learned Authors themſelves, but as to the general Argument, I ſhall give a brief and diſtinct account of it, and then leave it to the Reader to judge, whether he could deſire or contrive more evidence for the authority of any Book, than is produced for the Epiſtles of *Ignatius*. St. *Polycarp* then who was his particular Friend and Fellow-pupil under St. *John*, and St. *Irenæus* who was Diſciple to *Polycarp*, give in full and clear

clear teſtimony to the Martyrs Epiſtles. *Polycarp* ſent a Copy of them to the Church of *Philippi*, as appears both by his own Epiſtle ſtill extant, and by *Euſebius* his Quotation out of it, and that at a time when it was vulgarly known and commonly read in the Churches of *Aſia*. *Polycarp*'s Epiſtle was never call'd in queſtion by any good Author, was immediately atteſted by *Irenæus*, read with Veneration in the Churches of *Aſia*, even to the very time of *Euſebius* and St. *Hierom*. So that I know not what more undoubted or publick Teſtimony Monſieur *Daillé* could demand for his ſatisfaction, and indeed it is hard to conceive what more effectual evidence could have been provided to ſecure their Authority. For when St. *Polycarp*'s Epiſtle was ſo univerſally known, it was impoſſible to corrupt it. And yet in this wild Suppoſition, is Monſieur *Daillé* forced at laſt to ſhelter himſelf; he allows his Epiſtle it ſelf to be of undoubted Credit, and the greateſt part of it to have been written by *Polycarp*, but that a certain Impoſtor a little before the time of *Euſebius*, had foiſted in that Paragraph in which this paſſage con-

concerning *Ignatius* his Epiſtles is found, which *Euſebius* meeting with, he took it to be of the ſame credit with the reſt of the Epiſtle. Which is all ſo very ungrounded and precarious, that with the ſame liberty he might deny, or deſtroy the validity of any ancient Record whatſoever; but beſide this, the Epiſtle was ſo publick, ſo expoſed to the view of all men, ſo known to the Learned and Unlearned, that it were as eaſie to poiſon the Sea as for a private man to corrupt it. Or if he would attempt to do it, how was it poſſible for *Euſebius* and all the World beſide, to be deluded by ſo bold an Impoſture. Does not *Euſebius* himſelf inform us, that it was read in the Churches of *Aſia* at the time of his writing? Did he not then know what was read there, and therefore if this paſſage were not read, could he be ſo ſtupid as to be impoſed upon by one ſingle private man againſt the authority of all the publick Books, or if he were, could all the Fathers, whom *Daillé* will have to have followed his Dance, be ſo prodigiouſly blind and careleſs as in a thing ſo known and common, to be deceived

by him, and that no man (if we may believe him) ſhould diſcover the miſtake till *Nicephorus*, who lived five hundred Years after him? But granting the Teſtimony to be true, he denies it to be effectual, becauſe *Polycarp* only ſays that *Ignatius* wrote Epiſtles, but no where affirms that thoſe we have are the true ones. So that it ſeems unleſs St. *Polycarp* had written particularly againſt Mounſier *Daillé* himſelf, and declared that thoſe very Epiſtles that he oppoſes with ſo much zeal, were written by his Friend the Martyr, it was not poſſible for him to give ſufficient teſtimony to their truth. And yet that could not have been a more ample proof than this amounts to. For he declares not only that *Ignatius* wrote certain Epiſtles, but that himſelf made a Collection of them, and this Collection was ſeen by *Euſebius* and others of the Ancients. Now when we conſider the Reputation of the Martyr both for his acquaintance with the Apoſtles, his eminent dignity in the Church, the gallantry of his Martyrdom; when we conſider the time and occaſion of his writing, which was at the

the approach of his Death, and as it were his dying Exhortation to the Churches; when we conſider how they were recommended by *Polycarp*, whoſe Epiſtle was publickly read in their Aſſemblies; is it any way credible that theſe true Epiſtles ſhould all periſh before the time of *Euſebius*, and other counterfeit ones riſe up in their room, and among all thoſe learned men that then were very inquiſitive after Ancient and Apoſtolical Tradition, none ſhould ever diſcern or diſcover it? Nay, that *Euſebius*, a man ſo throughly verſed in all Eccleſiaſtical Antiquities, ſo converſant with the choiceſt Libraries, ſhould be ſo groſly and ſo eaſily cheated by a double Impoſture contrived in his own time, as to take the new invented Epiſtles of *Ignatius*, for the old authentick Writings of that holy Martyr, and then to vouch it by a forg'd Paſſage foiſted into *Polycarp*, againſt the authority of all the vulgar Books. So many hard Suppoſitions, one would think, were enough to ſhame any modeſt man out of his Opinion.

The ſecond Witneſs to theſe Epiſtles is St. *Irenæus*, whoſe teſtimony is no

more to be doubted of than the former, being extant both in *Eusebius*, and those pieces of *Irenæus*, that are preserved down to our times, though most of his works are perish'd. But to this Monsieur *Daillé* answers that *Irenæus* cautiously expresses his Quotation of the holy Martyr by *Dixit*, and not *Scripsit*, and thence conjectures that he quotes it only as a Saying or Apothegm, and not as a Citation out of his Writings. But, (1.) There is no Record of any such Saying as this, neither in that particular Quotation, that is preserved, could we know whom *Irenæus* means, did we not find the same sentence in *Ignatius* his Epistle to the *Romans*, so that it is a vain and a frivolous thing to forsake that, and to fetch the business from unknown and unheard of Reports. And. (2.) This is the very form of all *Irenæus* his Quotations, who never uses the word *Scripsit*, but always *Dixit*. But then why does he not cite some Testimony against the Hereticks out of *Ignatius*, in whom there were so many apposite to his purpose? I answer for the same reason that he does not cite other as pertinent Authors

thors as *Ignatius*. For out of all the Eccleſiaſtical Writers that lived before him, he has in his ſurviving Works but four Quotations, of which that out of *Ignatius* is one. Neither would this way of diſputing have been at all pertinent in the days of *Irenæus*, when the Hereticks againſt whom he wrote, allowed no Authority to the ancient Doctors of the Church, but always recurred to certain wild Apocryphal Books of their own, and therefore it had been but a vain thing for *Irenæus* to have preſt them with this Topick. The next Witneſs is *Origen*, who quotes him by name, but againſt this Teſtimony we have theſe two Exceptions: Firſt, That it is at too great a diſtance from the time of *Ignatius:* Secondly, That thoſe Writings, in which he is quoted are none of *Origens*. Firſt, As to the firſt we would grant the force of the Objection, if this had been the firſt Teſtimony in the cauſe; but following *Polycarp* and *Irenæus*, it proves the conſtant opinion of Learned men before *Euſebius*, and his Impoſtor. Secondly, It overthrows *Daillé*'s great conceit that theſe Epiſtles appeared not till

two hundred Years after *Ignatius*, whereas by his own confeſſion *Origen* writ within one hundred and forty Years. Thirdly, It cuts off the great pretence, that *Euſebius* was the Founder of this miſtake, whereas it hereby appears, that if it were one, he only followed his Predeceſſors in it. But the main of the Controverſie here is the ſecond thing, Whether thoſe Books aſcribed to *Origen*, in which *Ignatius* is quoted, are really his, or not. *Daillé* ſays, No; but his learned Adverſary has with no leſs than evidence of Demonſtration proved they were, though if he had not done it, St. *Jerom* has done it long ſince, who plainly tells us that himſelf tranſlated them out of *Origen's Greek* into *Latine*. And now after theſe I need add nothing of the Teſtimony of *Euſebius* and thoſe that follow him, for if he be miſtaken their Authority is of no uſe, if he be not it is of little neceſſity, but that he is not, is demonſtrated from theſe more ancient Teſtimonies. Though if any man deſire more Witneſſes, I ſhall refer him to my learned Author, who has ſummon'd them out of every Age, from that

Part. 1. Cap. 2.

that in which the Epiſtles themſelves were writen, down to that next our own.

But to all the Teſtimonies of the Ancients, what do our Adverſaries oppoſe? irſt, *Salmaſius* oppoſes the στιχομετρία of *Nicephorus* Patriarch of *Conſtantinople*, by which, ſays he, the Authentick and ſpurious Books of the Church were diſtinguiſh'd, and among many others the Epiſtles of *Ignatius* are cenſured for Apocryphal Books. But to this it is replied by the Pious, the Reverend, and the Learned, Dr. *Hammond*, that the opinion of one Author, eſpecially of later date (for *Nicephorus* lived not before the ninth Century) was not of weight and authority enough to oppoſe to the conſent of ſo many ancient Writers. Secondly, That the word Apocryphal, which is uſed by *Nicephorus*, does not always ſignifie Spurious, but it is very often uſed by Eccleſiaſtical Writers as oppoſed to Canonical, and ſo is given to Books, whoſe Authors were never queſtion'd, only to ſeclude them from the Canon of the Scripture. To the firſt it is replied by *Daillé*, and that I muſt ſay with

vide Meſſal. p. 252.

Diſſ. 2. c. 1. § 2.

Lib. 2. Cap. 4.

with impertinency enough, that the authority of *Nicephorus* is at leaſt equal to Dr. *Hammonds*, as if the Diſpute were between them two, whereas the Diſpute was between *Walo* and the Doctor, who when he had produced the Teſtimonies of the Fathers of all former Ages, could not but think it very hard that the opinion of one late Writer ſhould be oppoſed to all their Authority. To the ſecond he replies, That it is true that the word Apocryphal is oftentimes oppoſed to Canonical, yet it is very frequently too uſed by Eccleſiaſtical Writers as equivalent to Spurious and Counterfeit, and that therefore the Doctor in vain takes refuge in the Ambiguity of the word. But certainly, it is the manifeſt deſign of theſe men to tire out their Adverſaries with verboſe Trifles. For who could have expected this Anſwer, that when *Walo* had argued from the word Apocryphal, as if it only ſignified Spurious, and that when to the Argument the Doctor had anſwer'd that it no ways follows, becauſe it as often ſignified not Canonical; who, I ſay, after this would have expected that his Adverſary

verſary ſhould upbraid him with taking Refuge in the ambiguity of the word, when the Ambiguity of the word alone was not only a full anſwer to, but a clear confutation of the Argument? But he replies, ſecondly, That ſome of the Books joyn'd with it are confeſſed by all to be Suppoſititious, and therefore as they were cenſur'd for that reaſon, ſo muſt the *Ignatian* Epiſtles. But this is manifeſtly falſe, and though if it were true, it follows like all the reſt. For the Cenſure has no regard to their Author, but whether Spurious or Genuine, to their Authority, and only deſigns to ſhut them out from creeping in among the Canonical Scriptures. For that was the only danger it aim'd to prevent; leaſt the Books that either were or pretended to be of Apoſtolical Antiquity ſhould creep into the Canon. And it is plain from the Decree it ſelf, that *Nicephorus* intended nothing elſe than to determine the Canonical Books of Scripture, and prevent all others that came neareſt to them in Age, from obtaining ſacred Authority. But, ſays *Daillé*, Pope *Gelaſius* when he defines what Books are Apocryphal,

phal, he does not confine it meerly to the Canonical Scriptures, but to all other Eccleſiaſtical Writers not allowed of, and therefore this muſt be the meaning of *Nicephorus*. That is to ſay, that becauſe *Gelaſius* in his Decree determines what Eccleſiaſtical Books of what kind ſoever are to be reputed Orthodox, what Heterodox, that therefore *Nicephorus*, when he diſtinguiſhes the Canonical Books of the New Teſtament from the Apocryphal, does not mean as himſelf declares, but muſt be underſtood in the ſenſe of *Gelaſius*.

And yet when all is done there is no ſuch Teſtimony, but the whole Story is a meer Dream of their own, who catch at any ſhadow that may ſeem to ſerve their turn: For, firſt, it is certain, That *Nicephorus* was not the Author of the *Stichometria*. Secondly, That the Author of it, whoever he was, did not paſs this cenſure upon *Ignatius* his Epiſtles. For we find in it only the name of *Ignatius*, without any mention of his Epiſtles; Which indeed cannot in *Daillé's* ſenſe be call'd Apocryphal, becauſe they were never eſteem'd Canonical. For that is the true

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Original of the diſtinction, that whereas there were ſome Books written by the Followers of the Apoſtles, as *Clemens*, *Barnabas*, and *Hermas*, leſt theſe by reaſon of their nearneſs to the Canonical Books, ſhould in proceſs of time be reckoned with them, the Church was careful to range them in a Claſſis by themſelves: And whereas there were many other Books that pretended to be dictated by the Apoſtles, and written by their Diſciples, leſt they ſhould gain the Authority they pretended to, it concern'd the Church to give them the Apocryphal Mark. Seeing therefore *Ignatius* Epiſtles were never upon either of theſe accounts in any probability of being accounted Canonical, it would have been a needleſs Caution to refer them to the Apocryphal Catalogue. And though to *Ignatii Daillé* after his uſual way of making bold with his Quotations adds *Omnia*: It is probable that διδαχὴ ſhould be added as it is in another Index of Apocryphal Books in the *Oxford* Library. It being the cuſtom of ſome idle men of thoſe times to make Inſtitutions of Divinity, and then faſten them upon Apoſtles

ſtles and Apoſtolical men, out of which as our learned Author with great probability conjectures, was afterward made that Collection, which goes under the name of Apoſtolical Conſtitutions. Now theſe ſpurious pieces pretending to Canonical Authority, it was very requiſite to prevent and diſcover the Impoſture. But whatever probability may be in this Conjecture, of which we ſtand in no need, I am ſure there is as little modeſty as reaſon in *Salmaſius* his Argument, when he oppoſes the ſingle authority of *Nicephorus* to the concurrent Teſtimony of the Ancients. But much leſs in *Daillès* defence, eſpecially when we conſider with what ſtate and confidence he uſhers it in, *Ecce Auctores habemus & multis ante nos ſeculis denatos, & ab omni contra Hierarchiam ſuſpicione ſemotos, qui omnia* Ignatii *ſcripta rotunde ac ſine ullâ hæſitatione ad Apocrypha relegarunt in ſtichometriâ* Georgio Sincello *in libro antiquiſſimo præfixâ.* For what confidence can be more enormous than that when theſe Epiſtles have been atteſted by ſome of the beſt of the ancient Writers, ters, to pretend to deſtroy their Authority

thority by a multitude of Writers, and yet produce but one, and he at the diſtance of ſeven hundred Years. But the laſt aggravation of his confidence is, when he profeſſes that he produces the authority of this *Stichometria* not to prove his own Opinion, but only to remove the prejudice of its Novelty, and yet cite no other Authors in its behalf. For all the reſt of his Proofs are drawn from Negative Authority, in which he is no more happy than in his many one poſitive Teſtimony. For when he argues that theſe Epiſtles were unknown to every Writer that does not quote them, methinks it is an hard condition that he impoſes upon all Authors to cite all the Books that they read. But, ſays he, becauſe of that great authority that *Ignatius* had in the Chriſtian Church, when any Chriſtian Writers had any fair occaſion for it, it is very likely that they would have appeal'd to his Authority, which becauſe they have not done, we may juſtly preſume that there were no ſuch Writings extant in their time. This is the whole force of his Negative Argument; and yet when he comes to particulars, he is

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ſo unhappy as only to produce thoſe Authors whoſe cuſtom it is to avoid this kind of Quotations, as we have already ſhewn concerning *Irenæus*. And ſo for *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who though he is a great quoter of Heathen and Heretical Writers, yet no where cites Eccleſiaſtical Authors, unleſs ſuch as he ſuppoſed to belong to the ſacred Canon. And ſo for *Tertullian*, who too is frequent in the Teſtimonies of Heathens, or Hereticks, but ſcarce ever mentions any Eccleſiaſtical Writers, and when he does, it is not to prove or confute any Doctrine by their Authority. And this in the laſt place is the caſe of *Epiphanius*, who makes no mention of a great number of Eccleſiaſtical Writers that lived before him, and when he does it in his Book of Hereſies, it is only in an Hiſtorical way, either to ſpare his own pains, or to juſtifie the truth of his own Relations out of other Hiſtories, but never (as *Daillé* requires of him) to prove the truth of his Opinion. I mention no more of his Negative men, who make a great ſhew in the Contents of his Chapter, in that they are alledged altoge-

together impertinently to his purpoſe, becauſe all thoſe Paſſages which he imagines they were obliged to have quoted, belong not to the ancient Copies of *Euſebius*, but are taken out of the late Interpolations.

And now comparing the Teſtimonies on both ſides, we may very ſafely turn any honeſt man looſe to judg of the Authority of theſe Epiſtles, and that being once eſtabliſht, we can neither have nor deſire a more ample Teſtimony than they give us of the Primitive Practice of Epiſcopal Superiority. The holy Martyr every where founding the Peace and Security of the Church againſt Schiſms and Hereſies upon the Biſhops ſupreme Authority, which he, as our Adverſaries fancy, magnifies ſo highly (though not more than the other Orders of the Church in their reſpective Function) that they think that alone the main objection againſt the truth of his Epiſtles. Though in truth, ſetting aſide all Teſtimonies, the Argument and Spirit of them are no ſmall proof of their genuine Antiquity. Being compoſed of two Arguments peculiar to the firſt Writers of the

the Church; a vehement zeal for Unity, and a paſſionate ſenſe of Immortality. They were poſſeſt with a ſerious belief of the reality of our Saviour's Promiſes, and therefore they lived in this World purely, in order to the Rewards of the World to come, And how earneſtly the Author of theſe Epiſtles thirſted after it, no good Chriſtian can read without great pleaſure, and being affected with ſome workings of the ſame Paſſion. And as for his way of ſecuring, Peace, and Unity in all Churches by obedience to the Biſhops, and under them to the Preſbyters and Deacons, (for his fundamental Rule was, that nothing was to be done without the Biſhop) he derives it from our Saviour's Commiſſion and Promiſe to the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors for ever, when he conſtituted them Paſtors of his Flock, and promiſed to be perpetually aſſiſtant to them by his Divine Providence in the execution of their Office. And therefore he does not refer the Government of the Church to them for the greater Wiſdom, greater Learning, or any other natural Advantages of the men themſelves,

themſelves, but only upon the account of our Saviour's expreſs Inſtitution, who had ſent them as his Father had ſent him, and had therefore engaged himſelf to be preſent with them to the end of the world, ſo that upon that ſecurity to follow the Biſhop was to follow Chriſt, becauſe he had undertaken to be the Biſhops Guide. And this being the ſtate of the caſe between *Ignatius* and his Adverſaries, their Objections will not reflect upon his diſcretion but our Saviours Integrity, and when the cauſe is brought to that, *Ignatius* is ſecure, and if any man be pleaſed to raiſe any further controverſie, it is only between our Saviour and the Leviathan. And there I am content to leave it.

The next proof of the Primitive and Apoſtolical Practice of Epiſcopacy, that we meet with among the Ancients is in the *Apoſtolical Canons*, *i.e.* a Collection of the Decrees of Synods and Councils between the time of the Apoſtles and the Council of *Nice*; ſo that they may not improperly be ſtiled the Code of the Canons of the Primitive Church. And now concerning them the caſe of the Controver-

ſie is much the ſame with that of *Ignatius* Epiſtles; for the Teſtimony that they give in to the Epiſcopal ſuperiority is ſo full and plain that it is undeniable. And therefore there is no avoiding them but by impeaching their Antiquity and Authority; and as the ſtate of the controverſie is the ſame, ſo is the ſucceſs too; for it has been thoroughly diſputed between the ſaid *Monſieur Daillè* and a very learned Divine of our own Church, and that with the very ſame inequality of reaſon too. I ſhall not give any large account of the engagement, becauſe the Books are ſo lately publiſhed, and may be ſo eaſily peruſed, and therefore I ſhall rather refer to the Authors themſelves, eſpecially becauſe I am not a little zealous to recommend one of them as an incomparable treaſure of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity. And therefore omitting *Daille's* beloved Negative and internal Arguments, which his Adverſary has for ever routed with a prodigious force of reaſon and dexterity of learning, I ſhall only give an account in ſhort of the main rational point of the Controverſie. That is, what antient Teſtimonies are to be alledged either

either for or againſt their Antiquity. On the one ſide they are frequently owned and quoted by all the firſt general Councils, and therefore muſt have been enacted in the Interval between the Apoſtles and the Council of *Nice*. They are cited by many of the moſt ancient Fathers, as Canons of the firſt and moſt early Antiquity. And they are expreſly referred to by the moſt famous Emperours in their Eccleſiaſtical Laws. All which concurrent Teſtimony any moderate man would think ſufficient to give Authority to any Writing, and yet it is all over-ruled by a ſingle Decree of Pope *Gelaſius* ſuppoſed to be made *Anno Domini* 494. in which the Apoſtolical Canons are reckoned among the Apocryphal Books. But firſt, is it reaſonable to ſet up the Opinion of one man againſt many that were more ancient, and ſo much the more competent witneſſes than himſelf? Secondly, it is uncertain whether any ſuch Decree as is pretended were ever made by *Gelaſius*, in that we never hear any thing of it till at leaſt three hundred years after his time. Thirdly, if there were any ſuch Decree, it is certain that this Paſſage

concerning the Canons of the Apoſtles was foiſted into it, it not being found in any of the moſt ancient Copies; and *Hincmarus*, a Perſon of ſingular learning in his time, that makes mention of this Decree of *Gelaſius* as early as any Writer whatſoever, expreſly affirms that there was no mention of the Apoſtolical Canons in the whole Decree. *De his Apoſtolorum Canonibus penitus tacuit, ſed nec inter Apocrypha eos miſit.* Where he expreſly affirms, that in the Decree theſe Canons were altogether omitted, and ranged neither with the Orthodox, nor with the Apocryphal Books. This Teſtimony is given in with as peremptory terms as can be expreſſed, and therefore *Daillé*, for no other reaſon than to ſerve his cauſe, quite inverts the Propoſition, and changes *miſit* into *omiſit*, that is, turns *I* into *No*. But men that can deal thus with their Authors, need never trouble their heads with Teſtimonies of Antiquity, for after this rate it is in their power to make any Author affirm or deny what they pleaſe. But fourthly, ſuppoſe *Gelaſius* had made any ſuch Decree, how does that deſtroy the Antiquity of theſe Canons.

Canons, when he has condemned the Books of *Tertullian*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, and *Eusebius* for Apocryphal? And yet *Tertullian* lived three hundred years before the Decree, and therefore why may not the Apostolical Canons be allowed their reputed Antiquity too notwithstanding that Sentence, which only relates to the Authority his Holiness is pleased to allow them in the *Roman* Church, and not at all to their Antiquity, unless perhaps he designed to declare that they were not framed by the Apostles themselves, as he might fancy from their Title, not knowing that whatever was of prime Antiquity in the Church was by the first Writers of it stiled Apostolical, as being supposed to descend from the Tradition of the Apostles themselves. Fifthly, will Monsieur *Daillè* allow this Decree of *Gelasius* sufficient to give any Book the Apocryphal stamp; If he will, then he must reject many of the best Fathers, and in their stead admit the Acts of St. *Sylvester*; the Invention of the Cross, and the invention of St. *John Baptists* head, for whilst the History of *Eusebius*, together with the other Fathers, is

rejected, ſuch Fables as theſe are warranted by that barbarous and Gothiſh Decree. And that is enough, though there were nothing elſe, to deſtroy the Authority of this mans cenſure, his meer want of Judgment. Now comparing this one pretended Teſtimony of *Gelaſius* under all the diſadvantages that I have repreſented, with the expreſs counter-teſtimony of ſo many Councils, Fathers, and Emperours, if any man be reſolved notwithſtanding all to ſtick to it, I will ſay no more than this, that his Cauſe is much more beholden to him than he to his Cauſe.

And now having given this account of theſe Apoſtolical men that converſed with the Apoſtles themſelves, or immediately ſucceeded them in the Government of the Church, if we deſcend to their Succeſſours from Age to Age, we are there overwhelmed with the croud of Witneſſes. But becauſe they have been ſo often alledged and urged by learned men, I ſhould have wholly waved their citation, had not our Adverſaries made uſe of ſeveral ſhifts and artifices to evade their Authority. And therefore though I ſhall not

not trouble the Reader with their direct Teſtimonies, yet to ſhew the vanity of all our Adverſaries pretences, I ſhall endeavour to vindicate the credit of the Ancients againſt all their Exceptions. And here the firſt pretence is the ambiguity of their Teſtimony, which is endeavoured to be made out by theſe three things: Firſt, That perſonal ſucceſſion might be without ſuch ſuperiority of order. Secondly, That the names of Biſhop and Presbyters were common after the diſtinction between them was introduced. Thirdly, That the Church did not own Epiſcopacy as a divine Inſtitution, but Eccleſiaſtical; and thoſe who ſeem to ſpeak moſt of it, do mean no more. Firſt then a ſucceſſion there might be as to a different Degree, and not as to a different Order. Before we diſtinguiſhed between Order and Power, now between Order and Degree, and by and by between the Power of Order and the Power of Juriſdiction. But theſe diſtinctions are only the triflings of the Schoolmen, whoſe proper faculty it is to divide every thing till they have reduced it to nothing. For what does the degree of a Church-

Officer ſignifie but ſuch an order in the Church, and what order is there without a power of Office according to its degree, and therefore it is plain prevaricating with the evidence of things to impoſe theſe little ſubtilties upon the ſenſe of Antiquity, they (good men) meant plainly and honeſtly, and when they give us an account of Apoſtolical Succeſſions, they were not aware of theſe ſcholaſtick diſtinctions, and intended nothing elſe than a ſucceſſion in the government of their ſeveral Churches. Thus when *Irenæus* gives us a Catalogue of twelve Biſhops of *Rome*, Succeſſours to the Apoſtles in that See, what did he mean but the ſupreme Governours of that Church, when that was the only ſignification of the word Biſhop in his time. He never dream'd of their being ſtript of the Apoſtolical power, and ſo only ſucceeding them in an empty Title, in the meer name or the metaphyſical notion of Biſhops, and they were no more, if they had no more power than the reſt of the Clergy. But *ſecondly*, This new diſtinction ſpoils the former evaſion, *viz.* That the Apoſtles were ſuperiour in order, not in power over

over the LXX. but now a ſuperiority of order is made equivalent to a ſuperiority of power, for that from the time of our Saviours Reſurrection is granted them by our Adverſaries, though it is denied their Succeſſours. Thus we enlarge, or abate, or evacuate that Commiſſion that God himſelf has given them at our own meer will and pleaſure. If it be convenient for our cauſe to aſſert in one place that they were veſted with no ſuperiority of Power, they ſhall be put off with an empty ſuperiority of order ſeparated from power: If in another that Aſſertion ſeem not ſo convenient to our purpoſe, they ſhall be preſently advanced to an abſolute ſupremacy over the other Paſtors of the Church, but then that muſt laſt only during their lives, and as for their Succeſſours we are pleaſed to degrade them from the Apoſtolical both Order and Authority; and allow them nothing but an empty degree of I know not what; but to ſay no more of the difference between Order and Degree: As for the diſtinction between Order and Juriſdiction, though in one place I affirm that the Apoſtles were a diſtinct Order from the other

other Clergy, without any ſuperiority of Juriſdiction, yet in another, if my cauſe require it, there ſhall be but one order in the Chriſtian Clergy, and no difference but what is made by Juriſdiction, and the Biſhops themſelves ſhall be equal to Presbyters in order by Divine Right, and only ſuperiour in juriſdiction by Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution. For ſo I read, that for our better underſtanding of this, we muſt conſider a twofold power belonging to Church-Officers, a *Power of Order*, and a *Power of Juriſdiction*; for in every Presbyter there are ſome things inſeparably joyned to his Function, and belonging to every one in his perſonal capacity, both *in actu primo*, and *in actu ſecundo*, both as to the right and power to do it, and the exerciſe and execution of that power; ſuch are, preaching the Word, viſiting the Sick, adminiſtring Sacraments, *&c.* but there are other things which every Presbyter has an aptitude, and a *Jus* to *in actu primo*, but the limitation and exerciſe of that Power does belong to the Church in common, and belongs not to any one perſonally, but by a further power of choice

choice or delegation to it, ſuch is the power of viſiting Churches, taking care that particular Paſtors diſcharge their duty; ſuch is the power of Ordination and Church-Cenſures, and making Rules for Decency in the Church. This is that we call the power of Juriſdiction. Now this latter power, though it belongs habitually and *in actu primo* to every Presbyter; yet being about matters of publick and common concernment, ſome further Authority in a Church conſtituted is neceſſary beſides the power of Order; and when this power, either by conſent of the Paſtors of the Church, or by the appointment of a Chriſtian Magiſtrate, or both, is devolved to ſome particular Perſons, though *quoad aptitudinem*, the power remain in every Presbyter, yet *quoad executionem* it belongs to thoſe who are ſo appointed. Whatever truth there is in this, the Aſſertion is plain, that our Saviour appointed but one order in the Clergy, and that the difference which has ſince been made by the conſent of the Church conſiſts in nothing elſe but Juriſdiction. And this is very conſiſtent with the former Aſſertion, that

that there was no difference between the Apoſtles and the LXX. beſide diſtinction of order, when now there is no more by divine appointment than one order in the Church. And yet after all this their fluttering between Order and Power, Degree and Order, Power of Order and Power of Juriſdiction; all ſuperiority of Order, ſo much as it is, is ſo much ſuperiority of Power. Thus to take their own Inſtance of the Ἄρχοντες at *Athens*, the ἄρχων ἐπώνυμος, or the Preſident of the Aſſembly was ſo far ſuperiour over his Colleagues in Power as he was in Order: For whatſoever was peculiar to his Office gave him ſome more advantage in the Government of the Commonwealth than they had; for the very power of calling and adjourning Aſſemblies, preſiding and moderating in them is no ſmall degree of Power in a Republican Government. But ſeeing the difference between a ſuperiority of Order and Power is thought to be made out beſt by theſe parallel Inſtances of Commonwealths, let us run the parallel with the Apoſtles and the LXX. for if to be ſuperiour only in Order is to be Preſident

Preſident in an Aſſembly, or Prolocutor in a Convocation, and if this were all the Office peculiar to the Apoſtles, then when our Saviour appointed ſeventy Diſciples, and twelve Apoſtles, he made twelve Prolocutors over a Convocation of ſeventy. Seeing therefore that is too great a number of Speakers for ſo ſmall an Aſſembly, it is manifeſt that when he ſeparated them for a diſtinct Office, he intended ſomething more by an Apoſtle than meerly a Chairman in a Presbytery; and whatever it is, it is either an higher power than others had, or it is nothing at all. *Secondly*, This Succeſſion is not ſo evident and convinced in all places as it ought to be to demonſtrate the thing intended. For it is not enough to ſhew a Liſt of ſome Perſons in the great Churches of *Jeruſalem*, *Antioch*, *Rome*, and *Alexandria*, but it ſhould be produced at *Philippi*, *Corinth*, and *Cæſarea*, &c. This I perceive to be our Adverſaries darling Objection, being the only matter made uſe of to ſhift off ſeveral heads of Argument: This was the proof of the defect of the Teſtimony of Antiquity as to places; and

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is now here the only evidence of its ambiguity; and by and by will be called in as the only inſtance of its Repugnancy. But certainly their fondneſs to it is not grounded upon any great vertue that they ſee in it, but they are only forced for want of more material Arguments to lay a mighty ſtreſs upon ſuch poor pretences, as in any other diſpute they would be aſhamed to own. For *firſt*, ſuppoſing the Succeſſion cannot be ſhewn in all Churches, is that any proof againſt the Succeſſion that can? And ſuppoſe I cannot produce a Liſt of Biſhops at *Philippi*, *Corinth*, and *Cæſarea*, ſhall I thence conclude againſt the Succeſſion, though I have very good Hiſtory for it, at *Jeruſalem*, *Antioch*, *Rome*, and *Alexandria*? This is ſuch an Inference as rather ſhews a mans good will to his Opinion than his Underſtanding. But I have already proved that it is highly reaſonable to conclude the cuſtoms of thoſe Churches that are not known from thoſe that are; and apparently abſurd to queſtion the Records of thoſe that are preſerved for the uncertainty of thoſe that are not. But *ſecondly*, What though we do not

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find in all Churches an accurate Catalogue of the ſucceſſion of all Biſhops, do we find any Inſtance in any one ancient Church of any other form of Goverment? If we can, that were ſomething to the Argument, but that is not pretended in the Exception. But otherwiſe becauſe the exact ſucceſſion of Perſons in any Biſhoprick has not been preſerved with that care and diligence that it ought or might have been, to conclude that therefore there was no certainty of the Epiſcopal form of Government, is the ſame thing as to conclude, that there never was any ancient Monarchy in the world, becauſe in all their Hiſtories there are ſome flaws, or defects, or diſagreements as to the names of Perſons in the ſucceſſion. But we think it enough, that where we find an eſtabliſhed Monarchy, though we meet with ſome intervals of Hiſtory, in which the Princes names that then reigned are uncertain or forgotten, and meet with no Records, that the Government was at that time changed into a Common-wealth, to conclude that the Monarchy was all along preſerved. And that is the caſe of Epiſcopal Government

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in the Church, in that in all times and places, where and when Records have been preſerved, we find the ſame Form practiſed, and therefore ought to conclude, that the ſame was obſerved in thoſe ſhort intervals of time (if we ſuppoſe there were any ſuch) in which they were loſt) Though I do not find that the Regiſter of particular Perſons is ſo defective as is pretended, but that in moſt Churches their very names are accurately enough recorded. Thus *firſt*, for the Church of *Jeruſalem*, in which we find a ſucceſſion of fifteen Biſhops before its deſtruction, atteſted by the beſt and moſt ancient Writers, of the validity of whoſe Teſtimony we have no reaſon to doubt. For it is no Objection that ſo many Biſhops ſhould be crouded into ſo narrow a Room, that many of them could not have had above two years time to rule in the Church, When almoſt all that time the Jews were in Rebellion againſt the Romans, continually provoking them by their Inſurrections to the utmoſt ſeverity both againſt Jews and Chriſtians, for as yet the *Romans* underſtood no difference, nor were they broken into any open

diviſion among themſelves, all theſe Biſhops being as formally circumciſed as any of the moſt zealous Retainers to the Jewiſh Religion. So that it is no more wonder that ſo many Biſhops ſhould ſucceed in ſo ſhort a time, than that ſuch an incredible number of Jews ſhould periſh by the Sword. But *ſecondly*, It is leſs material to enquire (as *Scaliger* does) where the Seat of the Biſhops of *Jeruſalem* was from the time of the deſtruction of the City by *Titus* till the time of *Adrian*. For what if he had no Palace, was he no Biſhop? Or what if we cannot tell where he aſſembled his Flock, was there no Church? Perhaps it was in a Cockloft at *Pella*; but becauſe we cannot tell where it was, was it no where? And therefore to return the *Quere*, Was there then a Church of *Jeruſalem?* If there was (whether Epiſcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent, or all together) I would fain know where it was; and if you cannot tell me, conclude, as you do, that there was no Church at all. And ſo he has anſwered his own little Objection himſelf; that the Church follows the Biſhop, and is not confined to ſtone Walls,

Animad. In Euſeb. Chron. N. MMCXL.

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and therefore that the Church of *Jeruſalem* was then at *Pella*, though there was no ſuch place as *Jeruſalem*, as at this day the Patriarchal Seat of *Antioch*, is at *Meredin* in *Meſopotamia*, and that of *Alexandria* at *Grand Cairo*. As for the ſucceſſion at *Antioch*, I find not the leaſt ground to doubt of its truth, for I think it no objection, that though it be clear, it is not certain whether they ſucceeded St. *Peter* or St. *Paul*; for be it either, or both, or neither, it is all one ſo it be any; that is enough, that there was a ſucceſſion though we did not know the particular Founder of the Church in whom it began; and whoever of the Apoſtles it was, whether one or more, they had Apoſtolical Authority over it, and whoever ſucceeded them, ſucceeded in the ſame form of Government. As for the Church of *Rome*, all the difficulty is about the ſucceſſion of *Linus* and *Clemens*, being both reckoned in the firſt place, but the conjecture is very probable that *Clemens* ſucceeded St. *Peter* in the Church of the Jews, as *Linus* did St. *Paul* in the Church of the Gentiles, and that ſurviving both *Linus*, and *Cletus* that ſucceed-

ſucceeded him till the union of the two Churches, he governed both. For whatever ground there is for the conjecture that there were ſeparate Churches of Chriſtian Jews and Gentiles in other Cities, there is a very probable foundation for it at *Rome* in the Apoſtolical Hiſtory, *Acts* xxviii. where St. *Paul* expreſly declares to the Jews that from thenceforth he would preach only to the Gentiles, and ſo in all probability gathered a diſtinct Church of them by themſelves. And therefore it is obſervable, that in that famous paſſage of *Irenæus*, in which he derives the ſucceſſion of the Biſhops of *Rome* from St. *Peter* and *Paul* down to *Eleutherius* his Cotemporary, that he ſpeaks not of the Church of *Rome* in the ſingle number, but *Eccleſiæ Petro & Paulo Romæ fundatæ & conſtitutæ*, as if they had been ſeveral Churches. And to this purpoſe it is a pretty obſervation of Mr. *Thorndike* that St. *Pauls* being buried in the Way to *Oſtia*, and St. *Peters* in the Vatican (as we underſtand by *Caius* in *Euſebius*) ſeems to point them out Heads, the one of the Jewiſh Chriſtians, the other of the Gentiles, in that Ep. 13. chap. 18.

the Vatican was then the Jury of *Rome*, and notorious for the Reſidence of Jews. But though theſe firſt Records could not be fully made out, we have no reaſon to doubt of the Hiſtory, but rather to ſuſpect ſome miſtake in after-times, or the omiſſion of ſome circumſtance that might, if it had been recorded, have removed the difficulty. For it is very hard, that when *Irenæus* (to mention no more) gives us a Catalogue of the Biſhops of *Rome* from St. *Peter* down to the time when himſelf was at *Rome*, and who lived not at a greater diſtance from St. *Peter* than we do from the firſt Archbiſhop in Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, that we ſhould ſuſpect the whole truth of his Relation, becauſe we cannot give an account of all the particular circumſtances of the Succeſſion. This I ſay is too hard dealing with any ancient Records, though the concluſion is much harder, that becauſe we have no certainty of all the Perſons that ſucceeded in Church-Government, and of the particular manner of their Succeſſion, that therefore we have no certainty of the particular Form of it, notwithſtanding we have no Record of any

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form but one. As for the Church of *Alexandria*, there the Succeſſion is acknowledged to be cleareſt (as indeed it is unqueſtionable) only it is imputed to the choice of Presbyters; but of that in its proper place; the evidence of perſonal Succeſſion is enough, and all that is pertinent to our preſent debate. And the ſucceſſion of *Epheſus* might have been as unqueſtionable, but that one *Leontius* pleads at the Council of *Calcedon*, that all the Biſhops thereof, to the number of twenty ſeven, had been ordained in the City it ſelf; but that it ſeems, proving a falſe Allegation, he has given us no reaſon to believe him in his Tradition. An Inference much like this; that ſuppoſing two perſons to contend for their rights, and the Advocate of one of them ſhall in his plea alledge a falſe preſcription, his Adverſary ſhould thence conclude upon him, that he had no reaſon to believe that there was any ſuch Perſon in the world as his Client. For this is the caſe, The matter of the diſpute was where the Biſhops of *Epheſus* ought to be ordained according to the Canons? At *Epheſus*, ſays *Leontius*, by conſtant Preſcription.

ſcription. No, ſays the Council, for many of them have been ordained at *Conſtantinople*. Now is it not awkerd to infer from thence, that the Council denies the certainty of the Succeſſion it ſelf; when as the debate was grounded upon the ſuppoſition of it? It being granted on both ſides as a thing undoubted, that there was a ſucceſſion of Biſhops at *Epheſus*; and the Controverſie was only about the accuſtomed place of their Conſecration. Now from the variety of that to conclude, that it is uncertain whether there were any ſuch thing as Biſhops at all, is ſuch a forced Argument as proves nothing but that we have a very great mind to our Concluſion. I might proceed to the Succeſſion in other Churches, of which we have certain Records, but I will not engage my ſelf in too many particular Hiſtorical Diſputes where I know it is eaſie, if men will not be ingenuous, to perplex any matter with little critical ſcruples and difficulties; and therefore I will caſt the whole of this Controverſie upon this one Principle: That though the Records of the Church were as defective as is pretended, yet ſeeing all that are preſerved

ved make only for Epiſcopacy, and that our Adverſaries are notable to trace out one againſt it, that is evidence more than enough of its univerſal practice; and if that will not ſerve the turn, it is to no purpoſe to trouble our ſelves on either ſide with any proof that may be had from the Teſtimony of Antiquity; for if upon that account we have not any, it is not poſſible either for them or us to have it in this or any other Controverſie whatſoever.

Thirdly, The Succeſſion ſo much pleaded for by the Writers of the Primitive Church was not a Succeſſion of Perſons in Apoſtolical Power, but a Succeſſion in Apoſtolical Doctrine. Whether any Perſons ſucceeded in Apoſtolical Power has been already conſidered, and therefore all that is here requiſite to be enquired into, is, by what Perſons the Apoſtolical Doctrine was conveyed. And if it be pleaded by the Writers of the Church to have been done by Biſhops as the Apoſtles Succeſſours, that proves the Succeſſion of Perſons as well as Doctrines. But ſeeing this is to be done, as our Adverſaries inſtruct us, by a

view of the places produced to that purpoſe, let us view them too. The firſt is that of *Irenæus*, *Quoniam valdè longum eſt in hoc tali volumine omnium Eccleſiarum enumerare ſucceſſiones, maximæ & antiquiſſimæ, & omnibus cognitæ à glorioſiſſimis duobus Apoſtolis Petro & Paulo Romæ fundatæ & conſtitutæ Eccleſiæ, eam quam habet ab Apoſtolis traditionem, & annunciatam hominibus fidem, per ſucceſſiones Epiſcoporum pervenientes uſque ad nos, indicantes, confundimus omnes eos, &c.* Where we ſee, that whatever the Argument of *Irenæus* was, his deſign was to prove that the ſucceſſion of the Apoſtles was conveyed down by the hands of the Biſhops that were Succeſſours to them in their ſeveral Sees. So that it is evident, that he deſigned to prove the Succeſſion of the Doctrine by the Succeſſion of the Doctors; and therefore if he does not prove it, he does more; he ſuppoſes it, and by the undoubted evidence of it, demonſtrates the truth of the Doctrine, in that thoſe Perſons who were appointed by the Apoſtles to overſee and govern the Churches have conveyed the Apoſtles Doctrine down to us by their

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Succeſſors. And what fuller Teſtimony can there be of a Perſonal Succeſſion of Biſhops to the Apoſtles? And yet *Irenæus* does more than this, he derives the Perſonal Succeſſion from the Apoſtles down to his own time, and they all ſucceeded the Apoſtles as they ſucceeded one another; and as *Linus* was their Succeſſour, ſo was *Eleutherius*, who ſate at the ſame time that *Irenæus* wrote; and therefore if *Linus* was Succeſſour to the Apoſtles, ſo was *Eleutherius*, and if *Eleutherius* was Biſhop of *Rome*, ſo was *Linus*: So that it was one and the ſame thing to ſucceed in the Biſhoprick and the Apoſtolical Authority. And to the ſame purpoſe is the paſſage of *Tertullian*, *Edant origines Eccleſiarum ſuarum, evolvant ordinem Epiſcoporum ſuorum, ita per ſucceſſiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille Epiſcopus aliquem ex Apoſtolis aut apoſtolicis viris habuerit Authorem & Anteceſſorem. Hoc modo Eccleſiæ Apoſtolicæ cenſus ſuos deferunt; ſicut Smyrnæorum Eccleſia habens Polycarpum à Joanne conlocatum refert, ſicut Romanorum Clementem à Petro ordinatum edit, proinde utique & cæteræ exhibent, quos ab Apoſtolis in Epiſco-*

Epiſcopatum conſtitutos Apoſtolici ſeminis traduces habeant. The whole deſign of which paſſage is to preſcribe againſt the Hereticks by the Authority of the Apoſtolical Succeſſours, and that being expreſly appropriated to ſingle Biſhops, I hope I need not now diſpute whether they ſucceeded them only in Degree, and not Order; or in Order only, and not Juriſdiction; all that I deſire from this Teſtimony is, that they ſucceeded them in their ſeveral Churches (for though he inſtances only in the Church of *Rome*, yet he declares himſelf able and ready to give the ſame account of all other Churches) and by vertue of that warranted the truth of their Doctrine. Than which I muſt confeſs I cannot underſtand what more can be deſired to juſtifie their Succeſſion in the Apoſtolical Authority. Eſpecially from *Tertullian*, who was neither *Thomiſt* nor *Scotiſt*, and ſo was utterly unacquainted with thoſe fine diſtinctions of Degree, Order, and Juriſdiction, but ſpoke like a plain and a blunt *African*, when he called the Biſhops in their ſeveral Dioceſſes the Apoſtles Succeſſours. And ſo all the Writers of the

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ſame Age underſtood by a Biſhop, one ſuperiour to ſubject Presbyters; for whatever was the ſignification of the word in the Apoſtles time, it was now determined to this Order, and ſo uſed in vulgar ſpeech; ſo that when we meet with it in their Writings, we muſt underſtand it in the common ſenſe. And therefore by a Biſhop we muſt mean the ſame thing from the Apoſtles downward, and a Biſhop in their time was ſuperiour to Presbyters, and the Apoſtles are granted to have been ſuperiour to the other Paſtors of the Church, ſo that the Succeſſion from firſt to laſt continued in ſuperiority of Juriſdiction. And now when this Succeſſion is ſo expreſly derived down by ſingle Perſons, and when the truth of the Apoſtolical Doctrine is vouched by the certainty of this Succeſſion, it is a very cold anſwer to tell us, that the Fathers talk only of a ſucceſſion of Doctrines, and not of Perſons.

Fourthly, This Perſonal Succeſſion ſo much ſpoken of, is ſometimes attributed to Presbyters, even after the diſtinction came in uſe between Biſhops and them. I pray by whom? Why, by

Irenæus.

Irenæus. But does *Irenæus*, when he ſpeaks of the Biſhops and Presbyters of his own time, confound their names and offices, or any other Author of the ſame Age? Nay, do they not carefully diſtinguiſh them from each other; though when they ſpeak of things as done in the Apoſtles times, they may ſpeak in the language of thoſe times. The names therefore of Biſhop and Presbyter being not then diſtinguiſhed, it was but proper for them to expreſs things, as they were then expreſſed. So that though *Irenæus* never would ſtile a Biſhop of his own time by the name of Presbyter, but ever carefully diſtinguiſhed the two Orders; yet when he ſpeaks of the Biſhops of the firſt time, it is neither wonder nor impropriety, if he call them Presbyters; for I will yield ſo far to our Adverſaries, that they were ſo called till the death of the Apoſtles; and then ſucceeding into their Power, it was but fit that they ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by ſome proper name from the inferiour Clergy. And there lies the root of all our Adverſaries pretences, that they will have the Office of a Biſhop to have been

been born at the ſame time with the diſtinction of the Name. Which if we will not grant them (as without a manifeſt affront to the Apoſtles we cannot) their whole Cauſe ſinks to nothing. For that is the only proof alledged in behalf of the *ſententia Hieronymi*, that the Offices were not diſtinguiſht before the names. But of that in its due place already, at preſent I challenge them to produce any one Author, that treating of things after the ſeparation of the words was made, ever calls a Biſhop a Presbyter, or a Presbyter a Biſhop. And in that I am very much their friend, for if they can, it utterly overthrows their main Argument, that Biſhops and Presbyters were the ſame in the Apoſtles times from the promiſcuous uſe of their names, in that we find them promiſcuouſly uſed after the diſtinction. But that by the word *Presbyteri*, *Irenæus* does not mean a ſimple *Presbyter*, is plain from the words themſelves, in which he preſcribes againſt the novelties of the Hereticks by the undoubted antiquity of the Churches Tradition, which he ſays was conveyed by the Apoſtles themſelves

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to the *Ancients* who ſucceeded them in their Epiſcopacy; ſo that by his *Preſbyteri* he means, as he explains himſelf, ſuch of the Ancients, *qui Epiſcopatus ſucceſſionem habent ab Apoſtolis, i. e.* the Ancient Biſhops. This is all that I meet with material upon this Head, for when they go about to prove by the Authority of *Ignatius* himſelf that Epiſcopacy is not a *Divine*, but an *Eccleſiaſtical* Conſtitution, they are to be given up for pleaſant men that will attempt any Paradox in purſuit of the Cauſe. And it exceeds even the raſhneſs of *Blondel* himſelf, who that (as he ſpeaks) his St. *Jerom* might not ſtand alone, like a Sparrow upon the houſe top, has, after his rate of inferring, fetched in all the Fathers to bear him company, except only *Ignatius*, whom it ſeems he deſpaired of making ever to chirp *pro ſententiâ Hieronymi*; but now it ſeems at laſt, that the holy Martyr himſelf might not be made the ſolitary Sparrow, by being deſerted by all the Fathers, he is brought over to the Party, but with ſuch manifeſt force to himſelf as plainly ſhews him to be no Volunteer in the Cauſe. Thus when he commends the

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Deacon *Sotion* for being ſubject to the Biſhop *ut gratiæ Dei*, and to the Preſbytery *ut legi Jeſu Chriſti*. By the Law of Jeſus Chriſt we are taught to underſtand divine Inſtitution, but by the grace of God only humane Prudence; though that too was directed to it by the ſpecial favour or Providence of God as the only means of preſerving peace and unity in the Church. Be it ſo, the grace of God no doubt is as firm a ground of Divine Inſtitution as the Law of Chriſt; ſo that if Epiſcopacy was eſtabliſhed by Gods ſpecial favour, we are as well content with it as if it had come by the Grace of Chriſt. Neither does this Interpretation derogate any thing from the Epiſcopal Order, but very much from our bleſſed Saviours Wiſdom, *viz.* that when he had eſtabliſhed Presbyteries in his Church for the Government of it, that eſtabliſhment was found ſo ineffectual for its end, that Almighty God was afterward conſtrained, for preventing of Schiſms, and preſerving of Unity in the Church, in a ſpecial manner to inſpire the Governours of it in after-ages to ſet up the Form of Epiſcopal

Epiſcopal Government. And yet that was no leſs diſparagement to himſelf than his Son; for ſeeing what our Saviour did in the eſtabliſhment of his Church, he did by the Counſel of his Father; if its Inſtitution proved defective for its end, it was an equal over-ſight of both; and the After-game of Epiſcopacy was only to ſupply a defect that they did not fore-ſee, but were taught by Experience. A very honourable repreſentation this of the Wiſdom of the Divine Providence. However, take it which way we will, we cannot deſire a plainer acknowledgment of Divine Inſtitution, for ſo it come from God, it matters not which way he was pleaſed to convey it to us. And now have we not reaſon to wonder, when we ſee men attempt to bring this holy Martyr off with ſuch ſlights ſo expreſly againſt his own declared Opinion, who every where grounds his Exhortation of Obedience to the Biſhop upon the command of God, and adds even in the words following the forecited paſſage; οὐκ αὐτῷ δὲ, ἀλλὰ τῷ πατρὶ Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ πάντων ἐπισκόπῳ· εἰς τιμὴν οὖν ἐκείνου τοῦ θελήσαντος ἡμᾶς πρέπον ἐστὶν ἐπα-

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κούειν κατὰ μηδεμίαν ὑπόκρισιν· *And yet not to him, but to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Christ, who is the Bishop of us all, and therefore for the honour of him that requires it, it is our bounden duty to be obedient without hypocrisie.* What can be plainer than that the power of the Bishop stands wholly upon the command of God? So again in the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, Σπουδάσωμεν οὖν μὴ ἀντιτάσσεσθαι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, ἵνα ὦμεν Θεοῦ ὑποτασσάμενοι· καὶ ὅσῳ βλέπει ἡς σιγῶντα ἐπίσκοπον, πλειόνως αὐτὸν φοβείσθω, πάντα γὰρ ὃν πέμπει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἰς ἰδίαν οἰκονομίαν, οὕτως δεῖ ἡμᾶς αὐτὸν δέχεσθαι ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν πέμψαντα, τὸν οὖν ἐπίσκοπον δῆλον, ὅτι ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν κύριον δεῖ προσβλέπειν· Let us take care not to oppose the Bishop as we would be obedient to God, and if any man observe the silence of his Bishop, let him reverence him so much the more: For every one that the Master of the Family puts into the Stewardship we ought to receive him as the Master himself, and therefore it is manifest that we ought to reverence the Bishop as we would our Lord. And therefore it is a great over-sight to affirm, that there is not one Testimony

in all *Ignatius* Epiſtles that proves the leaſt ſemblance of an Inſtitution of Chriſt for Epiſcopacy, when in every Epiſtle he ſo plainly enforces his Exhortation of obedience to the Biſhop purely by vertue of the command of Chriſt. And thus have I cleared the Records of the Church from the defect of ambiguity grounded upon thoſe four pretences, That the Succeſſion might be only of a different degree; That it is not clear and convincing in all places; That where it is cleareſt, it it meant of a ſucceſſion of Doctrine, and not of Perſons; And *laſtly*, That if it were of Perſons, yet Presbyters are ſaid to ſucceed the Apoſtles as well as Biſhops. By which laſt we have already cleared the next thing objected, to ſhew the ambiguity of the Teſtimony of Antiquity, which was the promiſcuous uſe of the names, Biſhop and Presbyter, after the diſtinction between their Office was brought in by the Church; which I have already ſhewn to be falſe, and that if it were true, it utterly deſtroys their Argument of the Identity of a Biſhop and a Preſbyter in the Apoſtles times, from the

the promiſcuous uſe of the names. But becauſe new Inſtances are here brought to prove the ſame thing, we muſt follow. And firſt, as for the paſſages cited out of *Clemens Romanus*, he is confeſſed to have written before the diſtinction of the names, and therefore is here cited to no purpoſe. But the great and only Teſtimony is that of the *Gallican* Church, who in their Epiſtle to *Elentherius* Biſhop of *Rome*, give *Irenæus* the title of Preſbyter, though he had been nine years Biſhop of *Lyons*. And this looks very big, if it were true, but it is a meer Chronological Blunder of *Blondel* againſt the cleareſt Teſtimony of all Antiquity. For firſt the Martyrs of *Lyons* in their Epiſtle to the Churches of *Aſia* and *Phrygia*, ſpeaking of their Biſhop *Pothinus*, they give give him that Title; but in this Epiſtle to *Elentherius* they (or as *Blondel* will have it, the Church of *Lyons*) give *Irenæus* only the Title of Preſbyter, and both *Euſebius* and St. *Jerom* affirm, that he was no more, at the writing of it. To all which *Blondel* objects, that they both place the Martyrdom of *Pothinus* and his Frenchmen immediately after

Apol. p. 23.

that of *Polycarp* and the *Aſiaticks*, which was in the ſeventh year of *Marcus Aurelius*, and therefore the other was about the ſame time; ſo that when *Irenæus* went to *Rome* with the Letter to *Eleutherius*, which was in the ſeventeenth year of that Emperour, he had been ſo long Biſhop. But to this it is eaſily anſwered, that though the Relation of theſe two Martyrdoms immediately follow one another in *Euſebius* his *Cronicon*, and St. *Jeroms* Tranſlation, yet it does not at all follow that they immediately followed in time. Becauſe theſe two Martyrdoms are all that they mention concerning the fourth Perſecution, which laſted the greateſt part of the Reign of *Marcus Aurelius*; ſo that though one were in the ſeventh, the other might be in the ſeventeenth of that Emperour, and therefore we ought to follow *Euſebius* his more accurate account in his Hiſtory, who there expreſly places it in the ſeventeenth year, and withal affirms, that *Irenæus* was then only Preſbyter, rather than from ſo weak a ſurmiſe from the nearneſs of the Stories in his *Chronicon* to bring confuſion upon the whole Hiſtory,

V. *Valeſ.* Annot. in *Euſeb.* hiſt. l. 5. Procem. & cap. 4.

Hiſtory, eſpecially when it ſo fairly clears it ſelf, in that this Letter was directed to *Eleutherius*, who ſucceeded in the Church of *Rome* in the ſixteenth year of *Marcus Aurelius*; and in the ſame year that he came to that See, the *Gallican* Perſecution began, and therefore it was impoſſible that *Irenæus* could be advanced to the Biſhoprick before that time; ſo that it is like the reſt of *Blondels* ſtretches to infer from a remote gueſs that the Perſecution was in the ſeventh year, when it is evident from the cleareſt Story, that it was not till the ſixteenth or ſeventeenth: And now this Chronological miſtake being removed, this Teſtimony is clearly evacuated, and ſo this buſineſs is wholly ended.

The laſt thing alledged to prove the Ambiguity of the Teſtimony of the Ancients, is, that the Church did not own Epiſcopacy as a Divine Inſtitution, but Eccleſiaſtical. But of this Argument I ſhall chooſe to diſcourſe in the laſt place in anſwer to the *ſententiæ Hieronymi*, becauſe it is the only poſitive Argument that they produce in their own behalf. And for

that reaſon I refer it to the laſt place, that when I have made it appear that they have nothing material to except againſt what they oppoſe, I may then ſhew that they have as little to confirm what they aſſert, and both together will prove more than enough to put an end to this controverſie. As for the other two things that remain to ſhew the incompetency of the Teſtimony of Antiquity, *viz.* its Partiality and Repugnancy, little or no anſwer will ſerve their turn. For, as for the Partiality, all the proof that is material to our Argument, is, that the Fathers judged the practice of the Apoſtles by that of their own times. And very good reaſon too, becauſe they conformed the practice of their own times to that of the Apoſtles. But if our Adverſaries would infer, that the Fathers had no other ground of judging of the Practice of the Apoſtles but meerly by the prejudice of their own cuſtoms, it is only a precarious Aſſertion, and a direct impeaching them of a more than vulgar folly and ignorance. But the Fathers here glanced at are St. *Chryſoſtom*, and the Greek Commentators that follow him. Thus who

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can imagine any force in *Chryſoſtoms* Argument, that the Presbyters who laid hands on *Timothy* muſt needs be Biſhops, becauſe none do Ordain in the Church but Biſhops, unleſs he makes this the *medium* of his Argument, that whatever was the practice of the Church in his days, was ſo in Apoſtolical times. But there is no need of that poor *medium* to enforce his Argument, the force of it lies in the univerſal practice of the Church; for it was never heard of that meer Preſbyters took upon them the Power of Ordination, and therefore the meer exerciſe of that Power is a manifeſt proof that thoſe that had it were ſomewhat more than Presbyters; and even St. *Hierom* himſelf, who will have them ſometime (though when he knows not) to have ſhared with the Biſhop in all other parts and branches of Juriſdiction, excepts the Power of Ordination, as peculiar to the Epiſcopal Order. And there lies the force of St. *Chryſoſtoms* Argument, in the practice of the Church in all Ages, not in in the cuſtom of his own. And when he is vindicated, it is not to much purpoſe to

add any thing of the Greek Commentators, becauſe they all follow him; and though they may ſometimes fall ſhort in their reaſonings, yet it is manifeſt that they believed Epiſcopacy to have been received by the Catholick Tradition of the Church, and that is all the depoſition they are capable to give in this cauſe. The laſt thing objected, is the repugnancy of the Teſtimony, and this is proved from the difference of ſome accounts concerning the Succeſſion of ſome Biſhops. But this has been objected two or three times already, and as often anſwered; and therefore at preſent I ſhall ſay no more to it, than only granting the truth of the Premiſes, to mind the Reader of the weakneſs of the concluſion, that from the uncertainty of ſome Perſons in the Succeſſion infers an uncertainty of the form of Government it ſelf.

And now am I come to our Adverſaries only poſitive proof in their own behalf, that is, the Authority of St. *Jerom*; for though they pretend to one or two Authors more, yet ſtill at the laſt puſh St. *Hierom* is the only man. And the ſum of all that is pretended

from

from him is this, That though the Apoſtles exerciſed a ſuperiority over the other Paſtors of the Church during their own lives, yet immediately upon their deceaſe, having, it ſeems, provided no Succeſſours in that Power that themſelves enjoyed, the Church was every where governed by the whole Body or Common-Council of Preſbyters; but this Form of Government being quickly found very apt to breed Schiſms and Diviſions, it was, for the better prevention of them, agreed upon all the world over, to chuſe one Preſbyter out of the reſt, and ſettle a Supremacy of Power upon him for the more effectual Government of the Church. *Antequam diaboli inſtinctu ſtudia in religione fierent, & diceretur in populis, Ego ſum Pauli, Ego Apollo, Ego autem Cephæ, communi Presbyterorum conſilio Eccleſiæ gubernabantur. Poſtquam verò unuſquiſque eos quos baptiſaverat ſuos putabat eſſe, non Chriſti, in toto Orbe decretum eſt ut unus de Presbyteris electus ſuperponeretur cæteris; ad quem omnis Eccleſiæ cura pertineret, ut ſchiſmatum ſemina tollerentur.* From whence it is inferred, that though this Form of Govern-

Government hapned to be ſet up in the after-ages of the Church, yet it was not upon the account of any Divine Right or Apoſtolical Conſtitution, but purely upon prudential motives, and by the Churches diſcretion, that might have inſtituted either that, or any other alterable Form, as it judged moſt tending to its own peace and ſettlement. Before I come to anſwer the whole Argument, I cannot but obſerve what diſingenuous advantage theſe men make of the haſty expreſſions of that good Father; let him in the heat and eagerneſs of diſpute but drop an inconſiderate word that may reflect upon the Records, or the Reputation of the ancient Church, it immediately ſerves to juſtifie all their Innovations. And thus I remember Monſieur *Daillé*, in his ſhallow Book, of the Uſe of the Fathers, frequently makes good (as he thinks) his charge againſt them all only by impleading St. *Hierom*; but though he is made uſe of to ſerve them at all turns, yet in this Argument they devolve the whole credit of all the ancient Church upon his ſingle Authority. And is it not very ſtrange, that

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two or three haſty paſſages of this ſingle Father, not only againſt the concurrent Teſtimony of all the ancient Church, but againſt his own expreſs Opinion, ſhould be ſeized upon with ſo much zeal and greedineſs to give defiance to all the practice of Antiquity? That is bold enough, but it is much more ſo, to force all the reſt of the Fathers againſt their own Conſciences and Declarations to ſubſcribe to his Opinion, as *Blondel* has done, who having firſt placed St. *Jerom* in the front, and flouriſhed all his ſayings with large Commentaries, ranges all the reſt of the Fathers under his Colours, excepting only *Ignatius* (though ſince he too has had the honour to be admitted into the ſervice) but he has drawn them into the Party by ſuch a forced and preſumptuous way of arguing, that I know not a greater Inſtance of the power of Prejudice in a learned man. I once thought to have taken him particularly to task, but his trifling is ſo groſly palpable, that there needs no more to expoſe it to any mans contempt, than that he can endure the Penance of reading him over. And how

how was it poſſible for any man to diſcourſe after a wiſer rate, that undertakes to prove, that *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Epiphanius*, *Euſebius*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Theodoret*, *Theophylact* were Preſbyterians. It is juſt ſuch another deſign, as to go about to prove that *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Blondel*, *Salmaſius*, *Daillé*, and all the other *Calvinian* Fathers have been zealous Aſſertors of Epiſcopacy. And yet this task too ſome men have undertaken, and I ſuppoſe, will make good by the ſame Topicks, and doubt not but they will both gain belief together. Now in anſwer to the great Authority of St. *Jerom*, there are many things alledged and inſiſted upon by learned men; ſome plead, that it is contrary to his own expreſs and declared Opinion, and therefore is not to be taken for his ſetled and deliberate ſenſe of the thing, but only for an haſty and over-laviſh expreſſion. Others endeavour to expound him to a good ſenſe, conſiſtent with himſelf, and the reſt of the Fathers, *viz.* that writing againſt ſome proud *Deacons*, that would ſet themſelves above *Presbyters*, he tells them, that

that it was much the ſame inſolence as if they ſhould go about to prefer themſelves above the Biſhop, in that the diſtance was much the ſame, they alone being reckoned in the Prieſthood with the Biſhop, whereas the Deacons had no higher Office in the Church than to ſerve Tables and poor Widows. So that the difference was the ſame as in the Levitical Prieſthood, the Biſhop and the Presbyters being as *Aaron* and his Sons, who alone were accounted into the Prieſtly Office, whereas the Deacons had only the Office of Levites, that were no better than Servants to the Prieſts. And though Presbyters at that time exerciſed no Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction in the Church, yet they were formerly joyned with the Biſhop himſelf in the Government of it, and ſhared in all acts of Power and Diſcipline, excepting only Ordination. And for this reaſon, becauſe they were placed ſo near to the higheſt Order, that they were capable by vertue of their own Order to exerciſe almoſt all the Offices of that, it was not to be endured that ſuch inferiour Miniſters, as the Deacons were, ſhould prefer them-

themſelves above them. *Quis patiatur ut menſarum & viduarum miniſter ſupra eos ſe tumidus efferat, ad quorum preces Chriſti Corpus ſanguiſque conficitur.* Though this probably was all the deſign of St. *Jerom*, yet becauſe he ſeems to have ſaid more than he deſigned, I ſhall not contend about his meaning, but ſhall give my Adverſaries the whole advantage of his Authority, and let them make the beſt of it. Neither ſhall I go about to overthrow it by the contrary Teſtimony of the Ancients; for though that were eaſily done, the cauſe does not require it; but granting the Authority of St. *Jeroms* Opinion, and that it was never contradicted by any ancient Writer, I will demonſtrate the falſhood of the Opinion it ſelf from its own abſurdity. And therefore in anſwer to it, I will at preſent only return theſe few brief Conſiderations, each whereof will be enough to ſatisfie men, if they will be reaſonable, and altogether more than enough to ſilence them, if they will not.

The *firſt* ill conſequence then of this Opinion is only this, that it charges our

our Saviour and his Apoſtles of not making ſufficient proviſion for the laſting peace and ſettlement of the Church; ſo that had not After-ages ſupplied their defects in ſuch things as were abſolutely neceſſary to the Government of it, there had been no remedy for curing or avoiding eternal ſchiſms and diviſions; for according to this account of the Original of the Epiſcopal ſuperiority, all the world were by ſad experience convinced of its great neceſſity for the prevention of factions and confuſions. Now, what a diſhonourable reflection is this upon the Wiſdom of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, to inſtitute a Society of men in the World without providing a competent Government to ſecure its continuance in peace and unity?

But then *ſecondly*, whilſt this Conceit explodes the claim founded upon Divine Right, it is forced to grant a neceſſity founded upon natural Reaſon; ſo that acccording to it Epiſcopal Government is made neceſſary by vertue of all thoſe Laws of God and of Nature that provide for the Churches peace, and the preſervation of Society.

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For if this were the ground of that univerſal agreement in the Inſtitution of Biſhops that St. *Jerom* ſpeaks of in his *toto Orbe decretum eſt*, viz. *ut ſchiſmatum ſemina tollerentur*; and if there were no remedy for the prevention of this evil whilſt the Government of the Church was adminiſtred by the whole Body of the Preſbyters, the conſequence is unavoidable; that though our Saviour, or at leaſt his Apoſtles, had no more diſcretion than to leave all Church-Officers in an equality of Power, yet the light of Nature, and the Laws of Society made it neceſſary to eſtabliſh a ſuperiority of one Order above another. *Eccleſiæ ſalus in ſummi ſacerdotis dignitate pendet, cui ſi non exors quædam & ab omnibus eminens detur poteſtas, tot in Eccleſiis efficientur ſchiſmata quot ſacerdotes.* The ſecurity of the Churches peace depends upon the preheminence of the Biſhops power, which were it not ſupreme and paramount in reference to the other Clergy, we ſhould quickly have as many Schiſms as Prieſts, ſays St. *Jerom.* Setting aſide the Authority of the man, the reaſon and experience of the

the Argument it ſelf is unanſwerable. For in ſuch a vaſt body of men as the Clergy, it is obvious to every mans underſtanding, that conſidering the paſſions of mankind there could be no poſſible agreement, and by conſequence no Government without a ſuperiority of power in ſome above others. Now this is another pretty handſome reflection upon the wiſdom of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, that they were ſo ſhamefully defective in their firſt ſettlement of the Church, as ſhewed them to be ſo far from being directed by any divine and infallible Spirit, that they fell ſhort of the principles of common diſcretion. For though any man of an ordinary underſtanding might eaſily diſcern how impoſſible it was to avoid Schiſms, while the Power of the Church reſided in the whole Body of the Clergy, partly by the bandying of the Presbyters one againſt another, partly by the ſiding of the People with ſome againſt the reſt; partly by the too common uſe of the Power of Ordination in Presbyters, by which they were more able to increaſe their own Party by ordaining

thoſe who would joyn with them, and by this means perpetuate Schiſms in the Church; when, I ſay, theſe inconveniences were ſo obvious, what a prodigious neglect or weakneſs muſt it be to leave the Church through all Ages in ſuch a ſhattered and tottering condition, inſomuch that it muſt unavoidably have periſhed, had not ſome that came after them invented better means to prevent or redreſs miſchiefs than they had left them? For upon this it was, that the graver and wiſer ſort conſidering the abuſes following the promiſcuous uſe of this power of Ordination, and withal, having in their minds the excellent frame of the government of the Church under the Apoſtles and their Deputies, for preventing future Schiſms and Diviſions among themſelves, unanimouſly agreed to chuſe one out of their number, who was beſt qualified for ſo great a truſt, and to devolve the exerciſe of the power of Ordination and Juriſdiction to him; ſo that it ſeems we are more obliged *to thoſe wiſer and graver ſort*, than to the Apoſtles for their care in preventing Schiſms and Diviſions through all Ages of the Church. But

But *thirdly*, this conceit bottoms upon no better foundation than a bold and presumptuous conjecture. And there is no dealing with such men as are able to blast the credit of all the most undoubted Records of ancient times with an imaginary and sinister suspicion, for when we have pursued the Succession of Bishops through all Ages of the Church, up to the very times next to the Apostles, it requires somewhat a bold face to tell us, that though this perhaps may be sufficiently evident from the practice of the Primitive Church, and of the Apostles and their Deputies, yet there was a dark interval between the death of the Apostles and the time of the most ancient Fathers, in which it was abolished, and a new Form of Government set up, but that being found inconvenient, it was thought good, and agreed upon in all Churches, to lay that aside, and restore the old Apostolical superiority. These are very hard conceits, especially when they cannot so much as pretend to give us any the least probable account, where, and when, and by whom this was done. And this is pretty modest

to bear up ſo confidently againſt all the current of Antiquity without ſo much as any pretences of ground or evidence to rely upon. But ſo it hapned once upon a time in which *toto Orbe decretum eſt*, though when that time was, we have no more certain knowledg than we have in what degree of Latitude this *totus Orbis* lies. Perhaps it was (as *Blondel* will have it) about the thirty fifth year after the death of St. *John*, and what if he had been pleaſed to have ſaid the fifteenth, or ſixty fifth year, the gueſs had been altogether both as learned, and as well grounded. However, is it not a pleaſant thing to tell us boldly, and at all adventure, *in toto Orbe decretum eſt*, without ſo much as telling us when, or where, or attempting to prove the matter of Fact; eſpecially when it is plainly impoſſible that ſo univerſal and remarkable a change ſhould be ſo unanimouſly agreed upon and effected, and that upon ſuch great and urgent reaſons, without ever being ſo much as taken notice of. Why may we not as well diſcredit any Record (chuſe what you pleaſe) by pretending there once was, or perhaps might have

have been an unknown time, in which all mankind conſpired to put an abuſe upon all their Poſterity? As to ſay in this caſe, that there once was ſuch a ſeaſon, in which all the world agreed, though no body knows when, or where, to make an univerſal and perpetual alteration of the Form of Church-Government. But to conclude, granting theſe men all that they contend for, I would fain know what greater advantage any reaſonable man can deſire, either to make good the title, or to enhance the excellency of Epiſcopal Government than St. *Hierom* and *Blondel* give us, *viz.* that it was practiſed by the Apoſtles, but that upon their deceaſe their Authority devolved upon the Body of Presbyters, which Form of Government was every where found ſo incompetent and inconvenient, that all Churches in the world were within the ſpace of thirty five years, or thereabouts, convinced of the neceſſity of retrieving the old Apoſtolical Inequality, as they ever intended to ſecure the peace and unity of the Church. This is pretty well, and advantage enough to ſatisfie any modeſt

or reaſonable man, and therefore with it I ſhall reſt contented. Only I cannot but remarque the ſtrange partiality of our Adverſaries in this cauſe, not only to ſet up this abſurd ſuggeſtion of St. *Jerom* concerning the unknown time of an univerſal alteration of Church-Government, and that not only without the Teſtimony of any Record (for if there had been any then, it had not been unknown) but againſt the faith of all Hiſtory, and the moſt certain Tradition of the Church; there being nothing more clear in Eccleſiaſtical Story than the ſucceſſion of ſingle Perſons in the Government of the Church from the Apoſtles down to his own Age, eſpecially in the greateſt and moſt eminent Churches, ſuch as *Rome*, *Jeruſalem*, *Antiochia*, and *Alexandria*; ſo that there could have been no ſuch univerſal change as St. *Jerom* dreams of, when in theſe great Churches Epiſcopacy was eſtabliſhed antecedently to any ſuch ſuppoſed alteration. But beſide this, they oppoſe the cuſtom of one particular Church, and that atteſted only by one Author, to the known practice, not only of all other Churches, but of that

that particular Church it ſelf. Thus becauſe the ſame St. *Jerom* ſays, with the ſame haſt and inconſideration, that there was a cuſtom in the Church of *Alexandria*, from St. *Mark* down to *Heraclas* and *Dionyſius*, for the Presbyters of that Church, in the vacancy of the See, to chuſe one out of their own number, and from thence-forward call him their Biſhop, in the ſame manner as when an Army makes their own General, or the Deacons may chuſe one out of themſelves, and conſtitute him their Arch-deacon. Now, I ſay, ſuppoſing this Story to be true, is it not very ſevere by the ſingular practice of one Church to overthrow the Conſtitution of all other Churches? For what if at *Alexandria* they had a peculiar, or a corrupt cuſtom, does that impair or deſtroy the Catholick practice of the Chriſtian Church? It is poſſible not only for one particular Church to deviate in ſome circumſtances from their Primitive Inſtitution, but that is no Argument againſt a certain right. Yes, but, ſay they, this cuſtom was derived from St. *Mark* himſelf. But that would re-

quire ſome better proof than the bare Aſſertion of St. *Jerom*; For it is poſſible there might have been a prepoſterous practice in after-times, which he, to give the more Authority to it, might in his laviſh heat aſcribe to the Founder of it. But granting the truth of the whole Story, what was this cuſtom? Was it for Presbyters to ordain their Biſhop? St. *Jerom* ſeems willing to ſay ſo, but dares not, and therefore expreſſes himſelf in odd ambiguous and general terms, *Unum ex ſe electum in excelſiori gradu collocatum Epiſcopum nominabant*; which ſignifies nothing certain; but that he intends not Ordination is evident by the words that immediately follow: *Quid enim facit exceptâ ordinatione Epiſcopus quod Presbyter non faciat?* Which words, upon whatſoever account they are added, come in here very impertinently, if he had by the Story ſpoke of Ordination. At leaſt out of theſe general words nothing more can be collected, than their right or cuſtom of electing their own Biſhop, as was the cuſtom of Cathedral Churches afterwards. Nay, that too is more than is true, or can be proved,

for

for St. *Jerom* does not ſay, that the Biſhop was choſen by the Presbyters, but out of the Presbyters, ſo that he does not give them ſo much as the right of Election, but only appropriates to them the capacity of being elected, and that was all the peculiar priviledge of the Presbyters of that Church, that they alone were qualified to ſucceed in the See, and if any one will from hence infer, as Mr. *Selden* is pleaſed to do, their power not only of Election, but Ordination, he may thank himſelf, and not St. *Jerom* for his concluſion. For there is not any the leaſt ground for the inference beſide the learned Gentlemans reſolution to have it ſo; and therefore when he gives us an account of ſeveral both Divines and Lawyers, that underſtand no more by this paſſage than meerly capitular Election, he confutes them with no other argument than only by ſaying poſitively that they are *ipſi Hieronymo adverſiſſimi:* But alaſs, wiſe men will not quit their own Opinions, only to ſubmit to the confidence of other mens Aſſertions, and therefore he ought either to have proved more, or to have ſaid nothing. Nay, ſo far

Comment. in *Eutych.* p. 27.

far were they from having any power of Ordination that they had not that of Election, when it is so very well known that the Patriarch of *Alexandria* was of old time chosen, not by the Presbyters, but by the People; so that to ascribe their Election to the Presbyters is plainly to contradict the known custom of that Church. But be that as it will too; it is very strange, as Mr. *Selden* himself observes, that there are not to be found the least footsteps of this *Alexandrian* custom in any legitimate ancient Author but only St. *Jerom*. For if there had been any such custom in this Church, of which we have as good and as many Records as of any other Church in the world, it is scarce credible but that upon some occasion or other some Writer should have taken notice of it, and therefore so universal a silence cannot but bring a very great suspicion upon the truth of St. *Jeroms* relation; at least it is very unreasonable upon the single report of one hasty man concerning the peculiar custom of one Church, to renounce (as our Adversaries do) the known practice of all the Churches in the world beside.

Prefat. in *Eutych.* p. 6.

But

But to avoid this heavy Objection of ſingularity, our learned Adverſary has taken vaſt pains to find out a ſecond Witneſs, and then two Witneſſes, we know, according to our Law can prove any thing, and at length he has diſcovered an *Arabian* Author, and with more than ordinary joy and tranſport immediately publiſhes the particular Story by it ſelf, with large and learned Notes upon it; but not content with that, he procures the tranſlation of the whole Book, and is ſo ſatisfied with it, that though it were done by another hand, yet he adorns the Frontiſpiece with his own Picture. Now certainly one would take this valued piece to have been a work of prime Antiquity, and undoubted Authority. But as for its Antiquity, the Author of it lived no higher than the *tenth* Century, and that is ſo diſtant from the Primitive Age, that he had not been a more incompetent Witneſs, if he had lived in our own. As for his Authority, it is manifeſt that he was a very careleſs and injudicious Writer, his whole Book being every where ſtuft with childiſh fables and abſurdities, and particularly this

this Paragraph having as many falſhoods in it almoſt as words. For whereas St. *Jerom* continues this cuſtom only to *Heraclas* and *Dionyſius*, he continues it to *Alexander*, the immediate Predeceſſour of St. *Athanaſius*, which is above an hundred years difference; and beſide that, if ſuch a notable change had been firſt made in the preferment of *Athanaſius*, we could not but have had ſome notice taken of it in a Perſon whoſe life and ſtory is ſo well known; ſo that *Eutychius* could not have begun this new cuſtom more unhappily at any one Biſhop that ever ſate in that See than at St. *Athanaſius*, the proofs of whoſe Election by the People were debated and paſſed in general Council. Again in the ſame Story he tells us, that there were no Biſhops in all *Ægypt* beſide the Patriarch of *Alexandria* untill the time of *Demetrius*, which is moſt groſly and notoriouſly falſe. I might add many more proofs of ignorance, that are collected by the learned Doctors, *Hammond* and *Pearſon*, but I ſhall inſtance only in one that they have omited, *viz.* that there were no leſs than 2048 Biſhops preſent at the

Differt. 3. cap. 10. Vindic. l. 1. c. 10.

the Council of *Nice*. And yet from this groſs miſtake Mr. *Selden* is reſolved to bring him off, though he confeſſes there are not ſo many Biſhops in the Chriſtian world, for, ſays he, Dioceſſes were not then divided as now they are, but before the converſion of the *Roman* Empire, they were of a much leſs extent than they were afterwards, when they were modled in conformity to the Civil Government. Whether the Allegation be true or not, I need not now enquire; for though it be true, it is to no purpoſe; for what if it is poſſible that there might then have been ſo many Biſhops in the world, when it is certain there were not ſo many at the Council of *Nice*, in that (as he confeſſes in the ſame place) all the Writers that either lived in, or near the ſame time, and ſome of the Council it ſelf give in a much ſmaller number, and therefore it it is a very odd attempt, to bring him off from ſo groſs a miſtake againſt ſuch pregnant Evidence of what was done only by the poſſibility of what might have been done. We will grant this learned Gentleman that there might have been ten thouſand Biſhops there, if Pag. 38.

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he pleaſe, whilſt we are ſecure that there were not many more than three hundred; and therefore when his Author, with ſome other of his *Arabian* Friends, raiſe the number to above two thouſand; it is a manifeſt inſtance of Oriental Ignorance. But waving all other Exceptions, his Novelty is an unanſwerable Objection, though Mr. *Selden*, to magnifie his Author, is pleaſed to ſtile him the *Egyptian Bede*, but if *Bede* had betrayed as much Barbarity as this Author has done, he would have juſtly deſerved the Title of the *Engliſh Eutychius*. For it is evident that this man ſcraped together his Annals, not out of any certain Records, but out of a variety of Authors without judgment, ſtill adding to them the cuſtoms and faſhions of his own age; and hence it comes to paſs that he ſo frequently contradicts himſelf in the ſame Story, becauſe whilſt one Author tells it one way, and another another way, he follows both. But ſtill, I ſay, ſetting aſide his Barbarity, I would have excepted againſt *Bede* himſelf as a competent Witneſs of any matter of fact that was tranſacted at the ſame diſtance from his Age, as this

this was from the time of *Eutychius*, unleſs he had confirmed the truth of his Relation by ſome ancient Teſtimony, and then it is not *Bede*, but his Author, that I rely upon, and therefore unleſs Mr. *Selden* could have vouched the addition of *Eutychius* to St. *Jerom* concerning the Presbyters Ordination by impoſition of hands and benediction, he might have ſpent his pains as uſefully, if he had wrote Commentaries upon ſome of the old Welch Antiquaries, who tell us what their Anceſtors were doing from year to year many thouſand years before the coming of the *Romans*. And thus we ſee in ſhort into what wonderful evidence the whole oppoſition of Epiſcopacy is at laſt reſolved, a vain imagination from *Nicephorus Stichometria* oppoſed to the moſt ancient Fathers concerning the *Ignatian* Epiſtles; a ſuppoſed Decree of Pope *Gelaſius* oppoſed both to the moſt ancient Fathers, Councils, and Hiſtorians concerning the Apoſtolical Canons; an apparently falſe Aſſertion of St. *Jerom*, oppoſed to all the Writers of the Primitive Church concerning the Original of Epiſcopacy; laſtly, a barbarous

barbarous tale of a modern *Arabian* concerning the Ordination of the Biſhop of *Alexandria* by Presbyters.

And now, if we lay all the Premiſes together, it will I hope amount to a competent demonſtration of the matter in debate. For if our bleſſed Saviour firſt founded the Government of his Church in a real imparity of Church-Officers; if the holy Apoſtles, during all their time, conformed their practice to his Inſtitution; and if the Primitive Church every where, as far as their Records are preſerved, followed their preſcription; if no credible account can be given of the Original of Biſhops, unleſs we derive their Succeſſion from the Apoſtolical Age; if their Inſtitution be (as it is confeſſed to be) neceſſary to the peace and unity of the Church; if there be nothing to make it ſuſpected for being meerly of humane Appointment, but ſuch bold, ſuch groundleſs, and ſuch diſingenuous ſurmiſes, as may be as well objected againſt all or any the beſt Records of Antiquity in the World: If, I ſay, all this be true, I hope it will be no

preſumption

preſumption to add, that it is a ſufficient not only defence, but proof of the Epiſcopal ſuperiority againſt all Exceptions that are cloſe or pertinent in *Blondel*, *Walo*, *Meſſalinus*, *Daillé*, or any other Authors that are worth naming or reading. For as for the little People among our ſelves, that have for ſo many years waged ſo fierce and implacable a War againſt *Prelatry* (as they call it) they are ſo invincibly ignorant, that it is utterly needleſs to confute, and impoſſible to convince them: And how little they were all able to perform, is notorious from the great *Smectymnuan Mouſe*, that was brought forth by the clubbed labour of ſo many of their greateſt mountains. And therefore wholly neglecting them, and all their poor Endeavours, I have confined my ſelf to the diſcourſes of men of ſenſe and learning, *i.e.* no *Smectymnuans*, and have diſtinctly conſidered, and I hope confuted all their material pretences againſt the Epiſcopal ſuperiority in the Premiſes. But as for Grammatical Criticiſms, and Hiſtorical Digreſſions, they concern not us, becauſe they concern not our Enquiry. And if learned men

would but come up roundly, and keep ingenuouſly to the main point of the Controverſie, they muſt rub their foreheads pretty hard to out-face the evidence of our cauſe. But alas! the cuſtom of them all is to range up and down through the whole field, or rather wood of Antiquity, and purſue every thing, little or great, that ſtarts within their view. And they ſeem to make choice of this Subject, rather from it to take occaſion of ſhewing the variety of their Reading, than with any deſign to make good the undertaking of their Title Page. And it is very obſervable, that among the many thouſand Pages that have been of late years waſted in the Anti-epiſcopal cauſe, it will be very hard to find half an hundred directly to the purpoſe. And that of it ſelf is Argument enough that they have but very little to ſay againſt it. And what that is, I have in the Premiſes fully repreſented; for I proteſt, that, as I will anſwer it to Almighty God, I know no other pretences, that are at all pertinent or material, beſides thoſe that I have conſidered.

But in the laſt place, beſide the direct and poſitive Argument that I have thus far puſued from our Saviours own expreſs Inſtitution, the undoubted practice of the Apoſtles, and the moſt unqueſtionable Records of the Primitive Church. I come to the laſt Topick propounded, thoſe enormous inconveniences that unavoidably reſult from the contrary Opinion, I ſhall repreſent only two. The firſt is this, that if the Form of Government in the Chriſtian Church be not ſetled by the Founder of it, that then we are at a loſs to know by whom it may or ought to be determined. For the Society of the Church being founded upon an immediate Divine Right, no Perſon can juſtly challenge any Authority in it as ſuch, unleſs by vertue of ſome Grant or Commiſſion from the divine Founder of it. If therefore thoſe Commiſſions that were granted by our Saviour to his Apoſtles do not deſcend to ſome certain Order of men, as their Succeſſours in that Authority, wherewith they were inveſted, who ſhall challenge the exerciſe of it after their deceaſe? To this we never received any certain Anſwer, but are only

told in the general, *That the particular Form of Government in the Church is left wholly to the prudence of thoſe, in whoſe power and truſt it is to ſee that the peace of the Church be ſecured on laſting foundations.* But then I would fain know who thoſe are that are intruſted with this Power. It would have been very well worth their pains to have determined the particular Perſons expreſly appointed by God to this Office. Eſpecially when it is laid down as a fundamental Principle, that all things neceſſary to the Churches peace muſt be clearly revealed in the Word of God; and if ſo, then no one particular Form may be eſtabliſhed in it by any Authority whatſoever, becauſe no one particular Form (as is all along pleaded) is preſcribed by the Word of God, and yet it is plainly neceſſary to the Churches peace (if Government be ſo) that it be governed by ſome one particular Form. But yet however, when we come to enquire after theſe Truſtees to whoſe power it is left to ſee the peace of the Church ſecured on laſting foundations, the anſwer is ever ambiguous and unconſtant. Sometimes it is the Civil

Civil Magiſtrate, and ſometimes the People. But this very uncertainty where this Power is lodged is both in it ſelf, and according to the fundamental Notion of the Hypotheſis that we oppoſe, a manifeſt confutation of the whole deſign. For if our Saviour have not determined to whom it appertains, that is evidence enough that he never intended by this way to provide for the peace and ſettlement of his Church. For if he had appointed ſuch Feoffees in Truſt as is imagined, he would at leaſt have left it certain who they were that he intended; which not having done, that is demonſtration enough that it was never his intention to ſet any ſuch pretended Guardians over his Church. But be it where it will, it is very ſtrange that theſe Learned men ſhould be ſo intent upon the fineneſs of their Model, as never to conſider the wild conſequences of either way, when reduced to practice. For be it in the Civil Magiſtrate, they would firſt have done very well, according to their own Rule ro have ſearched for ſome Commiſſion in the Word of God, whereby our Saviour entruſted this

power with him. We find indeed Propheſies and Predictions that Princes ſhould become Patrons and Protectors of his Church, but that they ſhould be veſted with a Power of inſtituting and aboliſhing Church Orders and Offices at pleaſure is ſuch a wild conceit as will not find any the leaſt countenance from the Word of God. *Secondly*, By what Authority was the Church governed from our Saviour to the Reign of *Conſtantine*, when if he had appointed the Civil Magiſtrate Overſeer of his Infant Church, there was then none that cared to execute his Office. Beſide *thirdly*, If Church-Officers derive their Authority in the Church from the meer appointment of the Civil Magiſtrate, they are then only of Humane Inſtitution, and derive not their Power from any appointment of our Saviour, and ſo are only Miniſters of State, and not of the Goſpel. But to put it into the power of any mortal man to alter the whole frame of Government in the Church as he pleaſes, is the moſt improper way in the world to provide for its peace and ſettlement. For by this means it will be

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ever in the power of any Commonwealth lawfully to overturn all manner of Eccleſiaſtical Order at pleaſure: If to day perhaps the Biſhops, either by chance, or by vertue of ſome Grant from the Civil Government, enjoy the Supreme Power in the Church, it may with good Authority to morrow depoſe them, and tranſlate their Power to the Preſbyters, from the Preſbyters to the Deacons, from the Deacons to the People, and from the People to the Pope; and it would be very conſiſtent no doubt with the wiſdom of Chriſt in founding his Church, and providing for the peace and ſettlement of it, to leave its whole frame of Government thus at the Mercy of any mans Power or Will. We have one example of this project put in practice upon Record in the Long Parliaments Midſummer-Model of Reformation, when they vote, *June* 12. 1641. that all Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction ſhould be put into the hands of ſuch Commiſſioners as their Worſhips ſhould think fit. In purſuance of which they vote, *June* 21. that ſix of the Clergy and ſix of the Laity ſhould be appointed in every

County for the ſetling of Church-Government; but *July* 9. that nine of the Laity and three of the Clergy in every Dioceſs ſhould have power to exerciſe all Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction as ſhall be ordered by Parliament, and to have their monthly meetings for that purpoſe; that five of the Commiſſioners ſhall be a *Quorum*, and have full power to try all Eccleſiaſtical Cauſes, and to appoint Deputies under them in ſeveral places, and that if any of the nine Commiſſioners ſhould die or reſign, that five or more of them are to chuſe another preſently. Thus far they proceeded under the Government of *Mid-ſummer-Moon*; but about the beginning of the *Dog-days* they vote, that no Clergy-man ſhall be of the Commiſſion, and that the Committee ſhall be empowered to appoint five of the Clergy in every County, under them to grant Ordinations. Now all theſe Proceedings, as ridiculous as they are, and deſtructive of the very Being of a Church, yet, had the King joyned with his Parliament, had upon this Principle been juſtifiable. And ſo it will be in their power to vote up, and down

down what Orders and Offices in the Church they pleaſe, to day Epiſcopacy, to morrow Presbytery, next day Independency, then a Committee, and that of Lay-men too, and if they pleaſe, at laſt to aboliſh all Orders of the Clergy, in that there are none by this Principle eſtabliſhed by Divine Right; theſe are excellent models of Church-Government, and admirable methods of providing for the peace and ſettlement of it.

But if this truſt be veſted in the People, beſide that this too would require ſome proof out of the Word of God before it be granted, and that it is liable to all the former inconveniences, in that the putting the power of the Church into their hands makes the peace and ſettlement of it to depend upon the moſt giddy, moſt ignorant, and moſt uncertain thing in the world. Beſides all this, I ſay, this is ſo far from deſtroying any divine and unalterable Form of Church-Government, that it ſets up the *Socinian* model of Independency (for *F. Socinus* was the firſt founder of it) by Divine Right. In that according to it all Societies of Chriſtians

ſtians are by our Saviour entruſted with a Power within themſelves of electing of Church-Officers, and governing Church-Affairs, as they ſhall judge moſt conducible to Peace, Order, and Tranquillity, which is the exact model of Independent Government. Now this model if they will own, it is not the Church of *England* that they plead for, but Independency; and if it is that they aſſert, let them ſay ſo, and not carry on the Cauſe of the Congregational Churches under the name of the Church of *England*; but if they diſavow it (as they all do) I ſhall only challenge them how to avoid it. But to conclude this Argument, in this one Principle do all the Enemies of the Church lay their ground-work, that there is no known and ſetled Seat of Eccleſiaſtical Power, and therefore that whoever happens to have its preſent poſſeſſion, ſeeing he never received it by any Commiſſion from our Saviour, he may without any offence againſt the ſtanding Laws of Chriſtianity be depoſed from it. The inconvenience whereof is ſo great, that it ſeems to me a very forcible Argument from

from the nature and neceſſity of the thing it ſelf for ſome certain divine eſtabliſhment of Church-Government, in that without it, it is plainly impoſſible either to ſecure any peace, or exerciſe any Authority in the Church; becauſe whoever obtains it, has it not from any divine Commiſſion, and if no Commiſſion, then no Authority. However, I cannot but admire that thoſe learned men who take away the divine right of ſome particular Form of Church-Government have not all this while been aware that they run us into all the exorbitancies and confuſions of Independency, in that when they have once removed the ſettlement by Divine Right, they leave it, do what they can, entirely in the Peoples power to ſet up their own Form of Government. Seeing then, that unleſs the Chriſtian Church be ſubject to Government, it can be no more than a Rabble, and a Riot: Seeing unleſs the Government thereof be veſted in ſome certain Order of men, it muſt be for ever obnoxious to unavoidable diſorders and confuſions; and ſeeing it was with particular care ſetled by our Saviour on his

his Apoſtles, and conveyed by the Apoſtles to the Chriſtian Biſhops as their proper Succeſſours. I cannot ſee how the Divine and Apoſtolical Right of Epiſcopacy, if the providence of God had deſigned to make it unqueſtionable, could have been made more evident either from Common Reaſon or Catholick Tradition.

But *ſecondly*, As the taking away of the divine and perpetual Right of Epiſcopacy does on one hand open a door for Independency, ſo it does on the other for Popery. For next to reſcuing the Kings of *England* from the Uſurpation of the Popes of *Rome* upon their Crowns; under the pretence of an oblique or direct Supremacy over them; and the reforming of many Superſtitions both in Worſhip and Doctrine; the main deſign of our endeavoured Reformation was to aſſert and retrieve the Rights of the Epiſcopal Order againſt his illegal encroachments. For whereas the Original Government of the Catholick Church was veſted in the Apoſtolical Order, whereby as every Biſhop had ſupreme ordinary Power within his own Dioceſs, ſo a general

general Council of Biſhops had ſupreme Power over the Univerſal Church. So that whatever priviledges or preheminences were granted to the Biſhops of particular Churches by Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution, yet their eſſential Power was equal, and could no way exert it ſelf as to the Catholick Church but in Council; and ſo the Church was governed for many hundred years, till the Biſhop of *Rome*, taking advantage of thoſe peculiar priviledges and preheminences that were granted to his See as the ſeat of the Empire, did by degrees aſſume to himſelf an abſolute Sovereignty over all the Paſtors of the Univerſal Church, transferring all Eccleſiaſtical Government to the Court of *Rome*, where it was managed by himſelf and his Officers with all the arts of Tyranny and Oppreſſion. And here firſt began the breach, our reforming Biſhops at firſt not diſputing the preheminence of his See (becauſe that concerned not them) which he had for a long time enjoyed in moſt other parts of the Weſtern world, and perhaps might ſtill have done, would he have been contented with it: But alas they were

were no more fond even of the Title of *Patriarch*, as great as it was, than they are of their mock Title of *Servus ſervorum Domini*. Nothing leſs would ſatiate their ambition than a ſole and abſolute Sovereignty over all; and to this purpoſe they impudently applied all thoſe promiſes that our Saviour made to his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, of being for ever preſent with, and aſſiſtant to them in the exerciſe of their Office to the Popes Perſon; and they having once aſſumed this Power, reſolved to keep it, and for many Ages reigned abſolute Monarchs over the Chriſtian World. And here, I ſay, began the breach, the lopping off of that infinite power, and by conſequence, the ſtopping of thoſe vaſt treaſures that continually flowed from all parts of Chriſtendom into the Popes Coffers. Though many other corruptions that were crept into the Church, partly by the negligence of the Popes, while they alone governed in it; partly, by the Incurſions of barbarous Nations, they as juſtly complained of, and might probably have had them all reformed, if they would have

have yielded to him his two fundamental points, Wealth, and Empire. And as that was then their juſt complaint, ſo is it ſtill of all the Biſhops, that are by force kept in his Communion. Not only all their Revenues, but, which is much more diſhonourable, all their Power being taken from them, they being every where (unleſs ſuch as retain to the Court of *Rome*) little better than the Popes Curates; nay, not ſo much; being ſtript of all Authority, and the Government of their Dioceſſe wholly put into other hands. And here comes in the great Myſtery of Jeſuitiſm, for this complaint was ſo Univerſal, that it was impoſſible for the Pope alone to withſtand it, and therefore this project was at laſt fixed upon, being at firſt ſtarted by a fanatique Souldier, to ſet up a new Order of Eccleſiaſticks, exempt from all other Juriſdiction, and immediately dependent upon, and abſolutely ſubject to the Pope, and by them chiefly to manage all the Affairs of Chriſtendom. And there lies all the ſtrength of the *Jeſuits*, in their Vow of abſolute Obedience to their Supe-

Superiour, and of their Superiour to the Pope, ſo that whatever they are commanded, be it never ſo unaccountable to their own Conſciences, they are implicitely bound to execute upon pain of damnation. And this device has taken ſo ſucceſsfully, that notwithſtanding all that oppoſition that has been made to the Order, they have for many years exerciſed an abſolute Tyranny, not only over all the People, but almoſt all the Governours of that Church. And to juſtifie theſe irregular proceedings, the Biſhops are by little tricks, and ſenſeleſs diſtinctions of the School-men, degraded into the ſame Order with the Presbyters, and then the Prieſts of the Jeſuits Order are as well qualified to exerciſe Juriſdiction as themſelves, eſpecially, if licenſed thereto by the Popes Diſpenſation, according to the Decree of *Innocent* the IV. *Ex delegatione Domini Papæ quilibet Clericus poteſt, quicquid habet ipſe conferre.* So that by this device they may be enabled to give Prieſts Orders, as well as exerciſe Epiſcopal Juriſdiction. This deſign was all along aimed at in the

Inſtitutions

Inſtitutions of their Regular Prieſts, but never effectually compaſſed, till the foundation of this Society. So that you ſee that the whole myſtery of Jeſuitiſm at laſt reſolves it ſelf into Presbytery, and the fundamental Principle of both conſiſts in ſlighting and oppoſing the Epiſcopal Order. And therefore it is a little obſervable, that they were both born into the World at the ſame time, it being the year 1541. when *Calvin* made himſelf Pope of his Lay-Cardinals at *Geneva*; and *Ignatius* obtained to be made Superiour of his Order at *Rome*. Since which time, between them both, Chriſtendom has enjoyed very little peace or quiet, and particularly, by their joynt-malice was wrought juſt that time an hundred years, *viz.* 1641. the overthrow and deſtruction of the Church of *England*. And if the Church of *Rome* could but get rid of the Church of *England* by the help and zeal of the other Factions, ſhe would quickly ſcorn and defie all their little Pretences. For when they have run into all their ſub-diviſions, there can be no more than two other Forms

of Government; either the *Genevian* of Preſbytery, or the *Racovian* of Independency; but both being ſo palpable Innovations in the Chriſtian Church, and withall of ſo very late a date; it will be no difficult matter for the Church of *Rome* to defend her own Title, how bad ſoever, againſt ſuch upſtart and abſurd Competitors. But when they have to do with the Church of *England*, they are then apparently baffled with the undeniable practice and conſtitution of the Primitive Church. And this is ſo obſervable, that I do not remember any learned Writer of the Church of *Rome*, that has undertaken to charge any fault or defect upon the Conſtitution of our Church it ſelf. Here their only Topick is to upbraid her with thoſe abuſes, that have been put upon her by other by-deſigns, in which indeed ſhe is very much concerned as a Sufferer, but no way guilty as an Actor. For what is that to me if, when I ſee groſs and ſcandalous abuſes in the Church, I endeavour to remove or reform them, other men that pretend to come in to my aſſiſtance,

ſhall

ſhall under that pretence deſign nothing but Plunder and Sacriledge? That lies wholly upon their Conſcience, but I am innocent, and it is very diſingenuous, and fooliſh too, to load me with their wickedneſs. Let them prove that there were no corruptions in their Church that needed Reformation, and then I muſt confeſs I am convicted; but if they cannot, then the baffle lies plainly at their own doors, and it is in vain to charge me with the miſcarriage of other men. This, I ſay, is the ſtate of the Controverſie between the Church of *England* and the Church of *Rome* as to this point, and whilſt we keep to this Station, nothing is more eaſie than to maintain our ground, but if once we quit it, we fall under all the diſadvantages of Innovators. And however we may afterwards annoy the Enemy, we can never defend our ſelves. And that, I ſay, is the caſe of all other parties in their oppoſition to the Church of *Rome*, excepting the Church of *England*, and thoſe that ſtick to the ſame Primitive Conſtitution: As therefore we are concerned to fortifie our ſelves againſt the *Romans*, let us

ſecure this Bulwark, that they can never force; but if we once forſake it, we have nothing left but to encounter Innovation with Innovation, and then when both Parties are in the wrong, it is not much material who overcomes.

This is all I think good at this preſent to propound in the behalf of the Church of *England*, and when theſe Principles are laid at the foundation of the building, it will then, and not till then, be ſeaſonable to proceed to more practicable Propoſitions; and therefore I ſhall ſay no more at preſent than only to ſummon in all good and honeſt men to the maintenance of this juſt Cauſe, as they will one day anſwer it to Almighty God, againſt all the preſent open and wicked attempts of Atheiſm and Superſtition; and as they have any fear of God or man, as they love their Country, or their Poſterity, as they have any ſenſe of Intereſt, or Honour, or Conſcience, neither by their careleſneſs, nor their cowardiſe to betray the beſt Church in the world to the fury and the folly of the worſt of men. And in this caſe let no man make excuſes, or raiſe difficulties from the bad-

badneſs, or the oppoſition of the times; the worſe they are, the more they require our zeal to oppoſe and to reform them. And it is never more ſeaſonable to aſſert the Rights of the Chriſtian Church than when they are moſt diſowned. Let us but do our duty, and God will do his work, and let us not betake our ſelves to tricks and ſhifts upon any pretences (if any ſuch there are) of loſs or danger, the Church of Chriſt ſubſiſts upon no other Politicks than Courage and Integrity. Let us then be true to thoſe two fundamental Principles of Chriſtianity, and our Saviour has undertaken for the event, that the Gates of *Hell*, much leſs *Rome* or *Geneva*, ſhall never be able to prevail againſt it.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Have thus far adventured to ſtate the Caſe of the Proteſtant Religion as it is eſtabliſhed by Law in the Church of *England*. Thereby to declare what it is that we contend for in our Diſputes againſt all ſorts of Recuſants and Diſſenters. For it is not at all material what we oppoſe, but what we aſſert; and there would be no harm in Errour, were it not for its Contrariety to Truth. So that, before we defend the Church of *England*, it is neceſſary to define the true ſtate of its cauſe, otherwiſe we contend about we know not what. For as for the general Term of Proteſtancy, it is an indefinite thing, ſo that if all the men in *England* that are Enemies, or no Friends to the Pope of *Rome* may be liſted under that name; we have ſome Proteſtants that believe there is a God, and ſome that believe there is none; ſome that believe they have a Saviour, and a Soul to ſave, and ſome that laugh at both; there are *Hobbian* Proteſtants, *Muggle-*

tonian Proteſtants, *Socinian* Proteſtants, Quaker Proteſtants, Rebel Proteſtants, Proteſtants of 41, and Proteſtants of 48. All or moſt of which are as different as Popery it ſelf from the true Proteſtancy of the Church of *England*. And therefore it is neceſſary to ſtick cloſe to that, both as it is eſtabliſhed by the Law of the Land, and by the Law of Chriſt. For unleſs we limit it to the Law of the Land, we may in time have a Church conſiſting of nothing but Proteſtants diſſenting from the eſtabliſhed Religion, that is, a Church not only without, but againſt it ſelf. And unleſs we derive the Authority of that Religion, that is by Law eſtabliſhed, from the antecedent Law of Chriſt, we may quickly be (as we are in a fair way to be) a Reformed Church of Proteſtant Atheiſts, that is, a Church without Religion. And therefore all muſt be built upon this one Bottom, that the Church owned by the Law of *England*, is the very ſame that was eſtabliſhed by the Law of Chriſt. For unleſs we ſuppoſe that the Church was originally ſetled by our Saviour with divine Authority, we deny

deny his Supremacy over his own Church; and unleſs we ſuppoſe that the ſupreme Government of the Kingdom has power to abett and ratifie our Saviours eſtabliſhment by Civil Laws, we deny his Majeſties Supremacy over his Chriſtian Subjects; and therefore both together muſt be taken in to the right State and Conſtitution of the Church of *England*. And that, do what we can, will involve the Leaders of our preſent Separation in the guilt both of Schiſm and Sedition; of Schiſm in the Church, in that they withdraw themſelves and their obedience from thoſe who are veſted with a power to command them by vertue of a Divine Commiſſion; of Sedition in the State, in that they needleſly, and without any juſtifiable pretence, violate the Laws of the Common-wealth. Though the truth is, their Diſſenſion is ſomewhat worſe. For as they manage it, it is not only Sedition, but Rebellion, in that they do not only diſobey the Laws, but diſavow their obligation; ſtanding reſolutely upon that one Principle, that no Magiſtrate whatſoever has any power of eſtabliſhing any thing relating

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to the Worſhip of God. So that the Act of Uniformity is not ſo much faulty for the particular matters contained in it, as for the unlawful and uſurped Authority of it. And when the King and Parliament enjoyned the Book of Common-Prayer to be uſed in all Churches, they challenged a Power to which they had no right, and invaded the Prerogative of God himſelf. This is the firſt ground of the Separation, as it is ſtated by the chief Ring-leaders of it, and it is a plain renunciation of their Allegiance as well as Conformity. I can with all the ſtreinings of Charity make no better of it, and ſhould be heartily glad if I could ſee them without ſhuffling and prevarication clear themſelves of ſo pernicious a Principle.

To conclude, methinks Religion has been long enough trifled with in this Kingdom, and after ſo long and ſo ſad experience of our folly, it is time to return to ſome ſenſe of diſcretion and ſobriety. Before the late barbarous War we had the Scepter of Jeſus Chriſt and the divine right of Presbytery to advance, but now, after the murder of an hundred thouſand men, that

Cauſe

Cauſe has proved ſo ridiculous. as that it is grown aſhamed of it ſelf. However the pretence was great and ſolemn, but at this time the People are driven into the ſame exceſſes againſt the Church, no body knows for what, unleſs it be that ſome men among us are too proud or too peeviſh to recant their Follies. And therefore I conjure them in the name of God to lay their hands upon their hearts, and without paſſion ſeriouſly to conſider what it is for which they renounce the Church in which they were baptiſed into the Communion of the Catholick Church, tear and rend it into numberleſs pieces and factions, ſcare multitudes of ſilly and well-meaning People out of it, as they tender the ſalvation of their ſouls, and put the whole Kingdom into perpetual tumults and combuſtions about Religion; and when they have conſidered it, I ſhall only bind it upon their Conſciences, ſo to anſwer it to themſelves now, as they hope to anſwer it to their Saviour at the laſt day.

As for the foreign Reformed Churches, I have ſaid nothing of them, becauſe

becauſe they are altogether out of the compaſs of my Argument, which is confined within the four Seas, and concerns only thoſe that either are, or ought to be members of the Church of *England*. But if in any thing any other Churches deviate from the Primitive Inſtitution, they muſt ſtand and fall to their own Maſter. And God forbid we ſhould be ſo uncharitable as to go about to un-church them, or renounce brotherly communion with them, or to think that our bleſſed Saviour ſhould withdraw the promiſe of his Grace and Protection from them. For if every defect from his Inſtitution ſhould forfeit the Rights of a Chriſtian Church, there never was, as we may find by the Apoſtles account of the Churches in their times, nor ever will be ſuch a thing as a Church in the world. For in this life it is not to be expected that any thing ſhould be abſolutely perfect, the very nature of Chriſtianity ſuppoſes Imperfection, and accepts of Integrity, and as long as with ſincere Affections men adhere to the Principles of the Chriſtian Church, they are within the

promiſe

promiſe of the grace of God. Neither beſide this does it appear that they in the leaſt refuſe communion with the Epiſcopal Church, which is the main charge againſt our Separatiſts; nay, on the contrary, it is too evident, that they unanimouſly condemn our Diſſenters for their Schiſmatical departure from it. But being, it ſeems, accidentally caſt into another Form of Government in the midſt of State-tumults, they continue in it, either, firſt, through the power of prejudice and prepoſſeſſion, which are ſtrong things, and more or leſs to be allowed to all men. Or, ſecondly, for want of opportunity to new-mould themſelves after the platform of the Epiſcopal Churches, which if they ſhould attempt in Popiſh Countries, it is eaſie to foreſee with what fury it would be oppoſed. Or elſe, thirdly, for want of due information of the Primitive Inſtitution, ſuppoſing that as our Saviour has founded the Society of his Church upon Divine Right, ſo he has left it in the power of every particular Church to model it ſelf, as it ſhall judge moſt convenient to its own circumſtances. Or laſtly,

out

out of that reverence they bare to the Authority of ſome learned men, who at the beginning of the Reformation unfortunately hapned to miſtake the true Form of the Primitive Government. Or for whatever other reaſon it is, we ought to be ſo charitable as to think that they are not convinced of the divine Inſtitution of Epiſcopacy, or if they are, we ought to be ſo civil as to think that they would not refuſe it, and then as long as their miſtake proceeds from want of information, it were an unchriſtian thing to deny them our Charity, much more Gods Grace and Mercy; for though his Laws are perfect and unchangeable, yet in the execution of them, he condeſcends to the errors and weakneſſes of his Creatures, ſo that it is but a lamentable way of arguing againſt any divine Inſtitution becauſe ſuch and ſuch Churches have departed from it; this were to ſet up their Authority, not only above, but againſt that of God himſelf. However, it is to be hoped that in a little time they may come to a right underſtanding of this thing, for the controverſie about it has not been till very

lately

lately throughly ſifted in the Latine Tongue, but now it is determined with that ſtrange weight of Reaſon, that they cannot but diſcern, when they come impartially (as in time they will) to examine it, on which ſide the truth ſtands. I pray God to aſſiſt and direct them and us to a right underſtanding of things, that all parts of his holy Catholick Church may daily grow more and more into Unity among themſelves, and more and more conform their holy Diſcipline to the purity of the Primitive Inſtitution. *Amen.*

FINIS.